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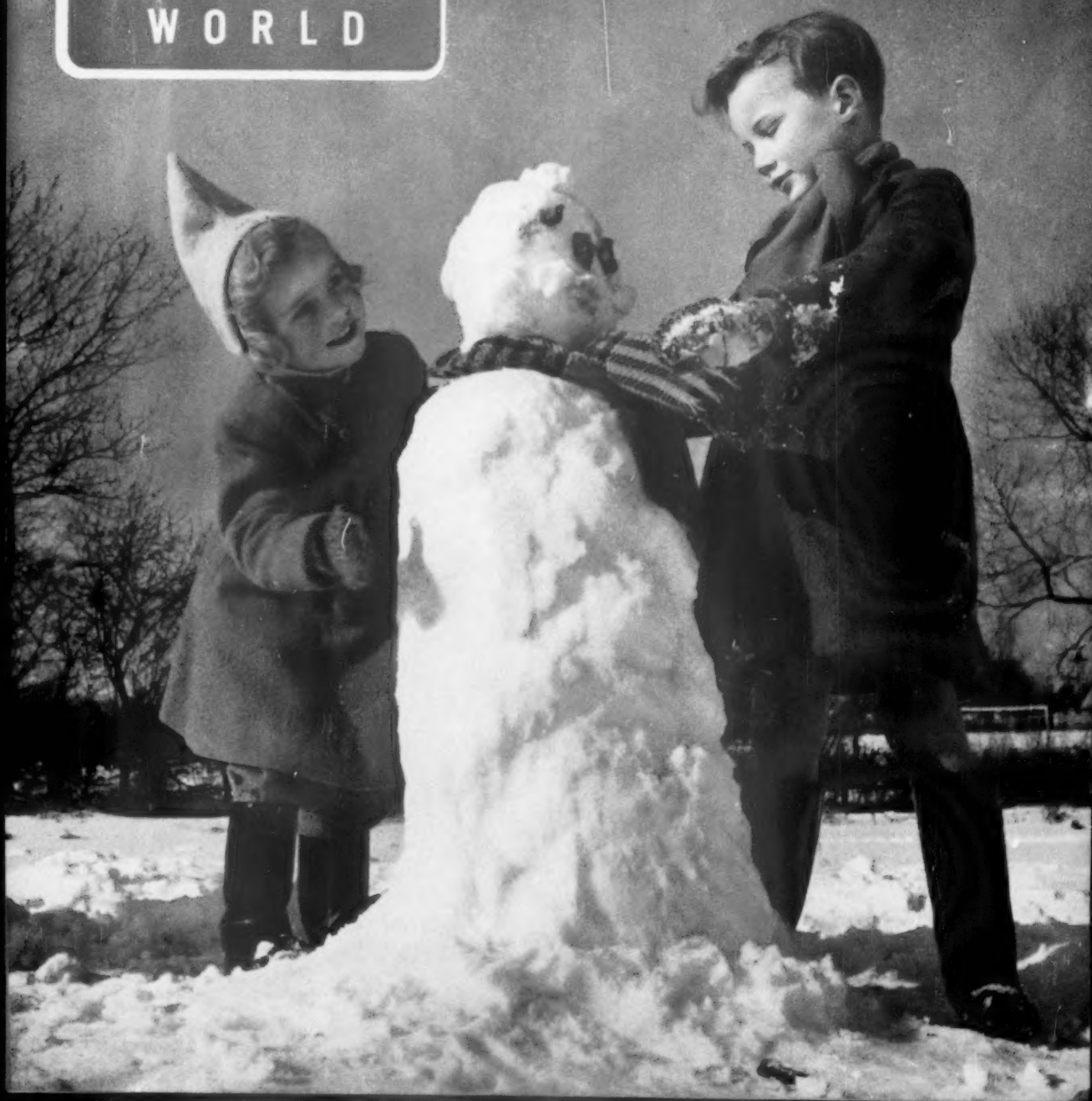
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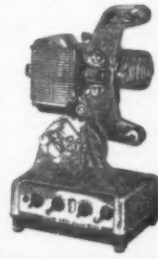
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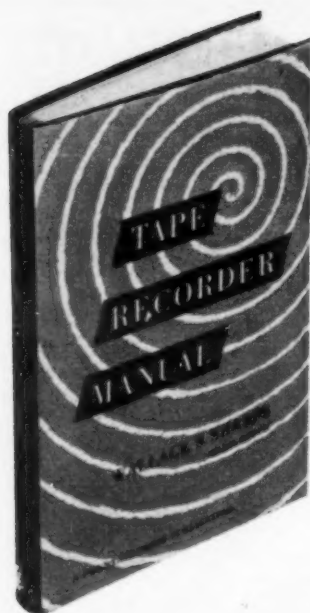
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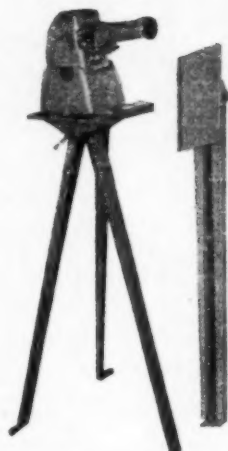
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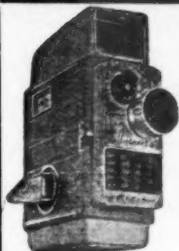
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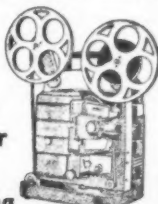
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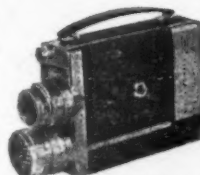
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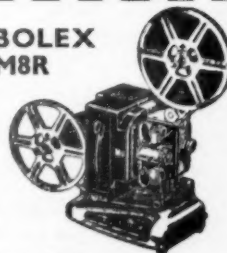
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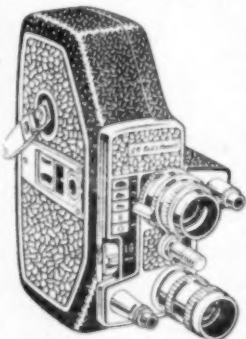
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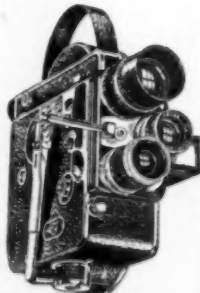
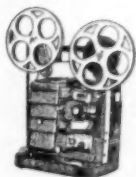
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# AMATEUR CINE WORLD

EVERY THURSDAY 1s 3d

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## This Year's Ten Best

*This May Prove the Best Year Yet: Enormous Range of Subject Matter:  
Judging of 1960 Competition Nears its Final Stages*

Do geraniums grow as they flower? How would you put a steam-roller to bed? Why were two men in such a hurry to get to the railway station? How do you plough a field? Can you build a motor-boat at an evening class? What happened to the sinister picture in the attic? In what film does a muscle-man just get out of frame before his bathing trunks snap? And in what film does a lady's bikini not snap? Who tried to make himself famous, and how did he do it?

No, we're not being flippant. We can answer all of these questions, and many others. We have been judging the 1960 Ten Best Films competition.

It will be obvious that the range of subject matter has been enormous. Documentaries have shown us the operation of a grain elevator in South Africa and of a goods train in southern England. We have shared holidays in Malta and Russia, watched children at play in Singa-

pore and Southport. One moment, the pilgrims at Lourdes, next the family at the London Zoo. Cine-cameras have covered, it seems, the whole world; and in fantasies, they have reached out into space or peered back into childhood's fairy-land.

Fiction has explored the familiar and the bizarre, the vicar's unexpected visit and the seedy streets of modern cities. We have smiled at homely comedy on a suburban rooftop in one film, then chuckled at wild goonery in a London park in the next. We have watched young love, then gone on to look at the calmness of old age. There has been a body hanging in the parlour, and a mummy in a packing-case. Sometimes we have been excited, sometimes puzzled. Once or twice we have been deeply moved.

What is the feeling of judges confronted by several hundred amateur

## "All Our Aims Are Over-Ambitious"

*"WE have just shot our first film, a highly experimental, over-ambitious, excerpt from Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'. All our aims are over-ambitious! We don't expect success, but it's fun trying." This is the disarming way in which Nonsuch Film Group of Epsom, Surrey—an informal group of cine and drama enthusiasts—introduce themselves.*

*Is it wise to be over-ambitious? Will there come a time when the fun of trying to do something different is insufficient armour against disappointment? Success may not be expected at first, but no one can be content with near misses for long, least of all the creative and imaginative. On the other hand, if you begin unenterprisingly and are content to follow a well-worn track, disillusionment may come no less swiftly.*

*Reconciling these two situations and trying to strike a balance between them is the problem that faces every club. The solution does not lie only in the members' capacity; it depends also on their outlook. There's a lot to be said for aiming a little higher than one thinks is wholly prudent—provided there is a firm technical foundation to work on. The trouble with so many experimental films is that their producers lacked the technical skill to enable their ideas—often very worthwhile ideas—to be realised.*

*As for members' outlook on film making, it is a leavening of humour and self-criticism that usually decides if the result is to be a success or failure. It is all too easy to be too serious—and from over-seriousness comes pomposity. We think that Nonsuch Film Group may well find success as well as fun, or clearly there is no preciousness in their make-up; and highly experimental though it may be, their first film does not seem to have called for elaborate resources: just a cast of two and a unit consisting of director, lighting cameraman, sound recordist and camera assistant. Equipment: Emel Plume on Bilora tripod, four 1,000 watt spots with gels, Philips AG8109 recorder and sundry bits of scenery and drapes. They expect to spend weeks trying to marry sound and vision—but, they say, "We can always fall back on post-syn."*



Romeo and Juliet, no less; 8mm., lip sync.  
RIGHT: The microphone has been set up;



the lighting cameraman sets focus. A scene from "Romeo and Juliet" is about to be shot.

films, piles of boxes containing anything from 50ft. of silent 8mm. Kodachrome to a couple of thousand feet of 16mm. sound-on-film? Well, it's pretty dismaying. But it's also very exciting. No one knows what the next package will bring. Very often, it's something interesting, something with a new idea — perhaps a novel story or a fascinating piece of information presented with pleasing clarity. Less frequently (but, in a good year, more often than you might suppose) there comes a film which really makes everyone sit up, something the judges will still be talking about at the end of the session, and which you may be talking about in a few months' time, when it has been screened at the National Film Theatre and started on its long rounds with the selected programme.

And now, with the preliminary screenings nearly completed, hundreds of pages of notes to collate and the short-list prepared for the final viewings, what are our feelings after miles of film and tape have ticked through the projectors, and we have seen as complete a representation of amateur movie-making as could possibly be assembled anywhere?

There's still plenty of excitement left, for this is likely to prove the best year yet. Perhaps a good idea of the quality of the top films can be gained when we say that, even after these long weeks of tiring screenings, we have been so impressed by some that we are keen to look at them again as soon as possible. But even leaving aside the most successful entries, and thinking back over the hundreds which haven't made the final grade, our attitude can only be one of intense admiration for the skill, the enthusiasm and the sheer hard work that amateurs everywhere are bringing to their task. Perhaps this is the most encouraging thing of all.

It is not a case of a handful of flowers in a wilderness of weeds. Behind the likely winners there's a crowd of films which almost shared the position with them. Behind them, a host of less satisfactory pictures which still, however, show originality and flashes of real talent. There is a continuous spectrum of quality, in fact. And this bodes well for the future. One year's commended entrant may be the next year's Oscar winner. There may be only ten producers who carry off the awards this year, but there are many close behind, ready to step up next time.

From a purely technical point of view, the general standard has been very high indeed. Sound tracks, whether on tape, stripe or optical, are becoming cleaner and smoother. Good titles, well filmed, are seen as an essential part of the picture, very often helping considerably to establish mood in those difficult moments at the beginning of the film.

Although, as we have indicated, sub-

ject-matter has ranged enormously wide, certain general trends are apparent. There has been an extraordinarily large number of films submitted by producers who have filmed with a definite purpose, making documentaries as a service to a cause in which they believe. In the intense competition, many of these must necessarily miss the highest commendations. But none has been unworthy; each of these pictures must surely prove a most valuable publicity or propaganda vehicle for the cause it serves.

Another sign that amateur film-makers are keeping their eyes and camera lenses steadily turned on the world around them has been the cluster of films concerned (if only tangentially) with the Bomb. As well as a handful of pictures whose main subject is the threat of nuclear war, many others have, most unexpectedly but often very effectively, brought this grim shadow across the screen to make a valid, telling point.

There have been more fantastic comedies than usual—in fact, the best humour has owed much more to the surrealism of the Goon Show than to the traditional sources of film comedy. (If the entry shows up a weakness among comedy producers, it is their comparative failure, this year, to find new "straight" gags, or to present old ones in a novel and amusing way.)

Both comedies and serious entries, too, have frequently been at their best when the footage has been minimal. We have come across many very short films with a striking originality all their own. Little films with big twists often reveal the amateur at his very best, working happily within his resources and turning out original creations which owe nothing to imitation of the professional cinema. It may be salutary to realise that fifty feet of 16mm. monochrome sound-on-stripe can be much more effective than a thousand feet of carefully exposed Kodachrome with a painstaking commentary and exhaustive coverage.

The traditional kinds of film are well represented, too, of course. Nature films, straight tales with good clear characterisation and neat endings—there have been plenty of these to choose from. There is no doubt that the final Ten

Best will provide as much variety as anyone could wish.

We are delighted—and we hope that you will be, too. The Ten Best competition provides stimulus for every kind of amateur film-maker. It gives both the novice and the expert the chance to test their work objectively against that of fellow-enthusiasts in this country and abroad. The committed producer who makes films because he has to, the talented amateur who puts his camera at the service of a worthwhile cause, the man or woman who films for fun and manages to put that fun on to film, the cameraman with a keen hobby who can stimulate a like keenness in others—all these get the chance of an audience for their efforts.

And last but not least, the Ten Best programme provides a few hours of unusual films as entertaining and as worthwhile as any the ordinary film-lover is likely to meet anywhere. This year will certainly be no exception. Confidently, we press on through the final stages, with the happy thought that what emerges will justify more than ever our belief in the quality (and value) of amateur cinematography.

## ZEISS INTRODUCES TOTALVISION

do you often go to the pictures? (It seems an odd question to ask of practising cinematographers, but in fact attendances by amateurs are surprisingly low). If you do you may eventually be seeing films in Totalvision (a CinemaScope variant) projected through the new high definition Visionar lenses produced at the Zeiss works at Jena. Due to a new construction, using a 6-lens air-spaced Gauss derivative, very good definition and contrast are obtained right to the edges of the field of even the enlarged cine frame (23.2 × 18.1mm.).

The lenses are produced in focal lengths of 65 to 119mm. at apertures of f/1.6, and up to 154 (soon to be extended to 218mm.) at f/1.9. The smaller aperture at the longer focal lengths has been made necessary by the limited diameter of the lens barrel mounting on current machines.

Professional projectionists among our readers may be interested to know that, having seen comparison photographs of test charts, we can testify that these Visionars are a great improvement on previous types produced by this East German company. Definition and contrast of the Visionar are appreciably better than from the 4-glass Prokinar, of similar focal length and aperture, which, while having fairly uniform definition, etc., across the whole field, appears appreciably woolly even at the centre. On the other hand, the Kipronar has slightly better central definition and contrast even than the Visionar, but the edge definition is very poor, principally through coma.



"Do you really think a self-threading projector is an advantage?"



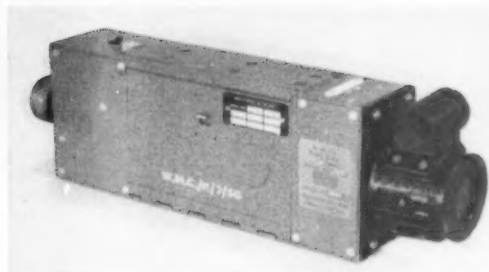


Fig. 1

Before you can adapt it for amateur use you need to know something of its design and how it works. Here is the specification and notes on function and operation. A later article will describe its adaptation—a job requiring only two tools and the minimum of technical knowledge.

## ALL ABOUT THE G.45 GUN CAMERA

BY A. GRAHAM AND K. M. GARRETT

THE G.45 camera gun was designed, primarily, for use in fighter aircraft of the Royal Air Force, and the operative mechanism was coupled electrically to the aircraft's armament. In short, when the guns were fired, the camera rolled. Photographic confirmation was thus obtained of any kills the pilot might claim, and in addition, no doubt, much useful information on the behaviour of both our own and enemy machines.

Being mounted inside the wings of the aircraft, the camera was some distance from the pilot and shot, as did its more lethal companions, forward only; this accounts for the fact that no viewfinder is fitted (we are often asked about this), the gunsight, in effect, being the viewfinder.

The G.45 is a working camera—a hardworking one, indeed—designed as a recording camera under a wide variety of conditions and not for the taking of pretty pictures. Hence its robust and utilitarian construction. (Fig. 1).

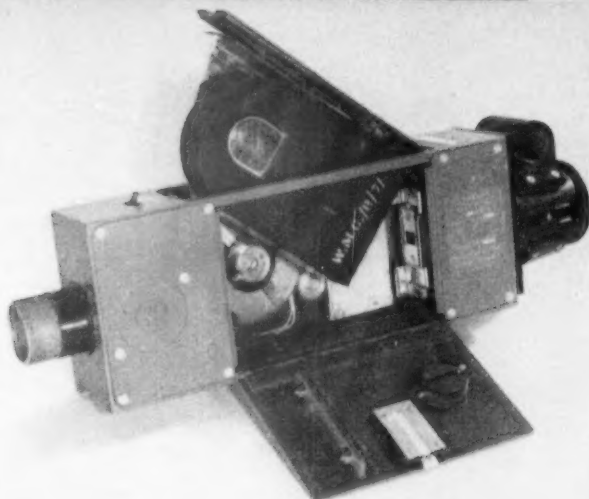
### Operation

The motor, at the rear of the camera, is mounted on two brass pins, which also serve as contacts. It transmits its power to

the take-up of the magazine and to the shutter and claw drive mechanisms by means of a long gear-train; details of this are given in Fig. 2. For simplicity, the gears have been numbered 1 to 7 in the sketch; the cogs are *not* marked thus. The numbers inside the circles representing the gears denote the number of teeth on that particular wheel. Gear No. 2 incorporates a slipping clutch device of simple construction. When power is applied to the motor, the mechanism "coasts" on this clutch, the claw and shutter drive mechanisms being held inoperative by a solenoid controlled latch. Or depression of the firing button, this latch is lifted and the camera operates. Gear No. 3 incorporates a clutch device also, a spring loaded friction plate, which drives the magazine take-up.

The amount of film exposed is not indicated on the camera itself. Each magazine or charger has a small rotary disc of insulating material in which a segment of brass is inlaid. This disc is designed to rotate once for each eight frames exposed (being driven by an eight picture sprocket inside the charger) or five times for each foot, the brass segment "wiping" two spring contacts and transmitting an impulse to the remote footage indicator, a small circular instrument calibrated 0-25ft. (Fig. 3). The toggle switch at the centre of the footage indicator controls the exposure device.

The specification above lists two exposure times, 1/64 and 1/214 sec. (or 1/100 and 1/450 sec. for the G45B. type), and it will be noted that the lens has an aper-



### Specification

Weight (loaded)	7 lbs. (approx.)
Dimensions (overall)	12½" × 3½" × 2"
Lens (both short & long barrelled types)	Fixed focus 2" f 3.5; no iris fitted.
Motor	12 or 24 volt, D.C., series wound, double pole, with adjustable governor.
Intermittent mechanism	Single claw, with register pin.
Shutter	Rotary vane, 2 × 45° Sectors (*)
Exposure	1/64 and 1/214 sec. (*)
Field	10° × 7°
Film capacity	25ft. in special magazines.
Gauge	16mm. (in case any one should be in doubt!)
Voltage identification	Clearly marked on plate at front of camera and on the motor moulding itself. It is also shown on an ivory plate, top front of camera body.
Colour code	12v. motor laminations: green 24v. motor laminations: yellow Also bands of colour (green and yellow) on lens mount.
*Some models (the G.45B) have 34° cut-away sections, and the exposures are 1/100 and 1/450 sec.	
N.B. Red painted magazine holder lid (top of camera) usually denotes a modified instrument (those with radial slot in auxiliary shutter, and enclosure of gate mechanism are but two examples).	
Current Consumption (Amps.)	12v. 24v.
Motor	3.0 1.5
Release solenoid	2.0 1.0
Shutter solenoid	0.3 0.5
Footage indicator	2.0 1.0
Body heater	4.0 2.0
Lens heater	1.0 0.5
Casing (including removable panels)	Alloy castings.
doors & lens mount	Alloy castings.
Magazine holder	Polished, plated brass.
Gear train & shutter gears	Plated brass.
Claw mechanism	Stainless steel.
Gate	Polished, plated brass.

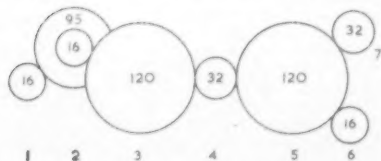


Fig. 2

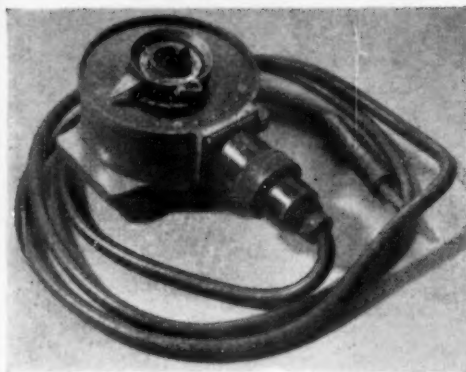


Fig. 3

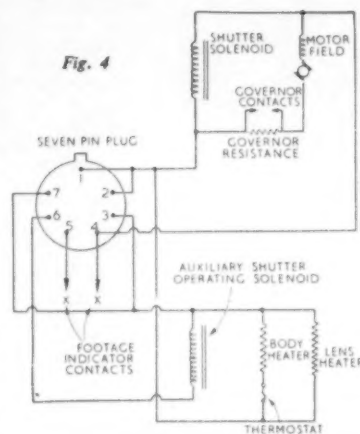
ture of  $f/3.5$  and that no iris is fitted. Some control of exposure had to be provided, and this is achieved by an ingeniously arranged shutter mechanism. The two-bladed spring steel shutter has a third auxiliary blade, which rotates beside the opaque sectors for the normal  $1/64$  sec. exposure. When the iris operating sole-

noid is energised through its operating switch, this auxiliary shutter blade lags and thus reduces the cut-away sectors from  $45$  deg. to  $13\frac{1}{2}$  deg. ( $34$  deg. to  $8$  for the B model).

Each camera has its own built-in central heating, so to speak—a body heater, next to No. 5 gear, just to the rear of the gate, and a second heater surrounding the lens, thus preventing condensation. All the electrical connections are brought out to a seven-pin plug at the rear of the instrument (or it may be found on the rear panel of the opening side). A schematic wiring diagram is given in Fig. 4.

In a later article we hope to show how, with the minimum of technical knowledge and only very little modification, these cameras can be adapted for amateur use, while remaining substantially in their original form, for we do not advocate the hacking of holes *ad lib*. Experience has taught us that wholesale modification often precludes the incorporation of later and often brighter ideas. The tools required? One small turncrew, one small

soldering iron with resin-cored solder and a small quantity of penetrating oil (or paraffin). A fully equipped workshop is not required.



## MAKING 8 mm LOOK SHARPER

AN old hand once told me that you can get away with an unsharp picture by sandwiching it between two scenes with good definition. It's true enough, within limits, but even if the faulty shot went unnoticed by the audience, it would offend me every time it was projected.

It is no good denying that with 8mm. sharpness is something of a relative term. Close-ups and medium close-ups can be practically indistinguishable from 16mm.—quite indistinguishable, in fact, when projected in a room of normal size at home—but distant scenes can appear very vague. That is one good reason for filming at close quarters whenever possible. But a distant view is sometimes needed to show the setting for a scene that follows, and there are ways of improving definition and, shall we say, getting an appearance of sharpness even when good definition is unattainable.

One reason for the poor reputation of 8mm. in this respect is that most users have come to accept it and to be content with unsharp pictures. And, of course, most 8mm. cameras are used in the hand. Now still camera users know that only people with an exceptionally steady hand can hold a camera quite still for  $1/30$ th of a second. If they want a really sharp picture at that speed, they use a tripod.

It is no easier to hold a cine camera steady than a still camera, so if the camera is hand-held each frame exposed at normal filming speed will probably suffer from slight dither. You may not be able to detect the dither, as distinct from the wavering between one frame and another, which can be detected.

But if there is movement of the camera during the  $1/30$ th sec. the film is being moved forward from one frame to the next (causing waver), isn't it obvious that there must be movement during the  $1/30$ th sec. the lens is open for each frame, causing dither and slight fuzziness? But if the thought of a tripod terrifies you, note the emphasis on the word "slight".

The first step to best possible definition is therefore a rock-steady camera; if you want

proof of this, go to a cine society meeting when an 8mm. club production is being screened. The next step is accurate focusing. This is not to belittle the fixed focus lens, which can be excellent for family and holiday filming; but for the ultimate in fine definition a focusing lens has the advantage.

Whatever lens you use, and no matter how you support the camera, remember that a contrasty picture looks sharper than a flat one. Over-exposure reduces contrasts, so that instead of a range of tones from black to white in monochrome, there is a limited range in varying degrees of grey. With colour there is a similarly restricted range of pastel shades. So for good definition err in the direction of under-exposure, and do not follow blindly a meter reading (or the electric eye setting) if there are nearby objects, darker than the distant scene or main subject, that will cause the meter to indicate too wide an aperture.

Those nearby objects, if included in the picture, can help to give an impression of sharpness to a distant scene. If there is an overhanging branch, a fringe of bracken, or a not too prominent figure in the foreground, and if this is rendered crisply, the whole scene will appear to be better defined. The foreground object may be in silhouette, for the interest is beyond; all we want from it is the contrast it creates. A focusing lens should, of course, be set to bring both foreground and distance within the limits of depth of field.

You may achieve the same end if you provide something in the distant scene that contrasts well with its surroundings. Consider a long-shot of a beach seen from a cliff top with (a) a number of people sitting, walking, running, or otherwise enjoying themselves; (b) the same beach, empty; and (c) the same with one tiny figure in a red or black swimsuit racing into the water. On 8mm. nothing may be sharp, by 16mm. standards, in any of the

shots. (a) and (b) may be quite disappointing; but in (c) the moving figure provides a focal point and, because it contrasts strongly with the beach, it will give a suggestion of sharpness to itself and to the rest of the picture.

Three things, then, for 8mm. sharpness: a steady camera, a minimum aperture, and strong contrasts. And attention to these things will improve 16mm. too. T.N.

## EDGE FOG

IF your film comes back from processing with splashes of pink (white on monochrome stock) at the edges, it is your own fault, and due, almost certainly, to loosening of the film on its spool when unloading the camera or, in the case of 8mm., when turning the film for its second run. In loading the camera it is easy to make sure the film does not loosen, by keeping a finger on the turns until the film is in the gate and the spool safely on its spindle.

But it does sometimes happen that when you open the camera to unload you find the film already loose on the take-up spool. Some cameras catch the end of the film in the gate; with others this happens sometimes but not always, and it isn't safe to rely on it. So stop the motor if you can just before the end is due to reach the gate.

In any case, make it a rule whenever possible to open the camera and take the film out in the dark. If it is loose, tighten it, gently, until you can feel that the edges are well within the sides of the spool. Then with 16mm. film, and with 8mm film that has made the double run, stick the end down with a bit of adhesive tape; an inch of the stuff wrapped round the metal container will do.

"In the dark" may be easier said than done, particularly when one is away from home, but there is a safeguard in the changing bag. This is a roomy bag of opaque black material with light-trapped openings for the hands; not very expensive, and it could no doubt be made at home. It is well worth a place in one's travelling kit, and more convenient at all times than struggling with improvised black-out.



HAZEL SWIFT  
goes round the stalls on  
behalf of movie makers  
in search ideas for films.

## EXPORT REJECTS

UNDER this title Movie Market offers ideas that have almost reached the screen at some time, but didn't quite make it. Some of these are ideas for complete stories, but mostly they are isolated situations and gags. They are displayed here in the hope that they may be of some use to shoppers in the Market—just as export rejects are often welcomed by discerning shoppers in other markets.

Today's sample is a situation which might act as an opening for any number of different stories, and having described it I will offer a few suggestions for working it up into a complete story.

Some years ago I was bitten with the idea of becoming an English Annie Oakley, and I decided to join the local rifle club. Since I knew nothing at all about rifles, and was short-sighted into the bargain, I was understandably a little nervous about the whole thing, but I put on a cheerful face as I strode across the concrete yard to the small corrugated iron hut which was the rifle club's H.Q.

It was a bright, sunny day, so I was considerably shaken to open the door of the hut and find myself in what appeared to be total darkness. The door closed gently behind me with a soft click, and I had a terrifying feeling of being trapped. Not only was the place dark, it was also frighteningly silent.

Seen from outside, the sunlit hut had looked small and extremely ordinary; but standing inside it in the darkness and silence I felt as though I were suddenly alone in a vast emptiness, rather like being alone on Salisbury Plain on a moonless night. There must be some other people inside the hut—but where were they, and why were they so quiet?

Suddenly they made their presence known as three rifle shots cracked through the silence. Suppose they were firing at me—or at any rate in my direction? And suppose they were beginners like me, and liable to miss the target and hit some innocent bystander? After all, I couldn't see them; I couldn't even see any kind of flash as they fired; so it was more than likely that they couldn't see me.

I backed against the wall of the hut, and cautiously sidled my way along it, stiffening as more shots rang out, and relaxing slightly as I realised that once more they had missed me. Suddenly it was all over—lights were switched on, an inner door was flung open, and a brisk and handsome instructor came to-

wards me and led me into the main part of the hut, I now discovered that I had been standing all the time in a narrow corridor behind the firing party, well out of reach of even the wildest beginner.

As a happy start to my career as a marksman the incident left much to be desired, but my career was not a long one, anyway. In fact, it lasted rather less than a month because owing to my myopic vision I somehow managed to shoot the instructor instead of the target, and was quietly advised to resign.

## Antiques Stall

LOOKING at some early films from the National Film Archives recently, and listening to the comments of the audience around me, I had a vision of our grand-

## 'Do-It-Yourself' Stall

WHAT kind of story might follow an opening such as that suggested in "Export Rejects"—that sudden change from cheerful sunshine to darkness and panic? You might go on to show the progress of the nervous novice, through training and practice, to success in championship shooting, making a useful and encouraging training film for other rifle clubs. (I don't recommend using the bit in the last paragraph about shooting the instructor, though.)

If you are not an enthusiastic shot, you are more likely to want to make use of the situation as one of a series of comedy gags. Since female clowns are rare, it might be better to change the timid, short-sighted heroine of my story into a timid, short-sighted hero; but keep the instructor brisk and handsome, see to it that he enjoys scoring off the hero, and you have the foundations of a classic rivalry. There is no need to limit their activities to the rifle club; since this would obviously only occupy their spare time, it should be possible to show the two rivals in similar conflict in their daily life by having them both work in the same factory or office, and so keep the story going by their constant efforts to outwit each other.

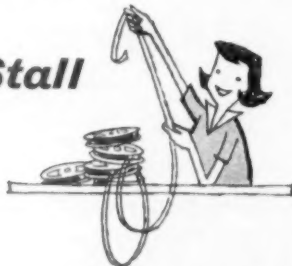
But suppose those shots had been aimed at me as I stepped into the rifle club? Suppose some enemy was waiting in the darkness to kill me, and that there was no corridor wall to protect

children looking at our old films. In 20 years' time we shall appear to them both ugly and ridiculous; but in 40 years' time we may look a delightfully romantic bunch, with our quaint, old-fashioned turbe-jets and sputniks. And as for our clothes—I can imagine the comments of the 21st century as they watch our faded images on their screens:

"Hardly suitable for space-travel—can you imagine anybody wearing all those separate pieces of wool and cotton and leather, all held together with bits of elastic and leather and metal! Just look at Grandpa—he's wearing a coat, trousers, shirt, tie, belt, socks, shoes—he must have taken hours to get dressed. And the end result is nothing like as elegant as our one-piece boy-lasutes.

"And what a curious way they had of spending their time—most of them don't seem to have kept any filmed records of themselves doing anything but sitting by the sea or sitting on the lawn. Oh, well, I suppose in 1961 there really wasn't much else that the poor things could make films about".

Wasn't there?



me? It wouldn't be a bad place for a murder—at least, nobody outside would take any notice of the sound of a gun firing, and the body could easily be removed by van and taken far away for disposal.

The situation would lead quite easily into a murder story. The victim might be the murderer's rival in love, or a blackmailer, or a spy trapped by a self-appointed firing squad. The story might go forward as a straightforward piece of detection; or it might flash back to show what had led up to the murder.

Either way the incident would make an opening to a film that would seize the attention of any audience, if only because of the swift, dramatic change from the ordinary, cheerful appearance of the hut in the sunshine to the deadly menace within it. Would any budding Hitchcock care to try it?

(Technical note: there is no need to attempt to play the scenes inside the hut in total darkness, so long as it is dim enough to appear black to the person stepping into the hut out of the sunshine.)

# Telling the **STEEL** Story

That's what United Steel  
films aim to do. To tell  
you the fascinating,  
spectacular story of the  
steel industry. And to  
tell it from many  
different viewpoints



**SPECTACULAR.** For sheer spectacle, accompanied by a haunting musical score, there has been no film on steel to beat *STONE INTO STEEL*. Voted top documentary at the Venice International Film Festival in 1960, it tells how five million tons of ironstone are transformed each year into 1,400,000 tons of steel at Appleby-Frodingham Steel Company in Scunthorpe.

**SOCIOLOGICAL.** In a small Yorkshire community like Stocksbridge, the local steelworks is part of a way of life. *STEEL TOWN* puts the focus on Samuel Fox and Company Limited, portrays its many links with the daily life in Stocksbridge. An essentially human story, suitable for all audiences.

**SYNTHETICS.** To make iron and steel, you need a lot of coke. In making coke, all sorts of chemical derivatives are obtained, which form the basis of paints, fertilisers, plastics and synthetic resins—to name but a few. *OUT OF THE FOREST* explains how it is all done at the works of United Coke and Chemicals Company Limited.

These 16 mm. films run for about 30 minutes each. They are all in colour and with a sound track. For more details about them and other United Steel films send for your copy of this free leaflet.



*Issued by the Public Relations Department,*

**THE UNITED STEEL COMPANIES LIMITED**

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US166





# And All You Need is an Audience . . .

## TO ENJOY FREE SPONSORED FILMS

Sponsors make films to build prestige, sell goods, train staff; to promote causes, mould opinions, improve health; to encourage travel—and help the traveller to get there alive. As diverse as their reasons for sponsoring films are your reasons for borrowing them. In every community, there are audiences waiting for the shows that you and your projector can easily provide.

To be bought: one stamp for a letter. To be gathered, one group of people, not necessarily large. Add one screen, one 16mm. sound projector and one seat for each member of the group, and enter the world of sponsored films. You hold the key to an inexhaustible supply of programmes that cost nothing to show.

In the sponsored-film libraries there is something—and usually much—for every audience and every taste. You, being a reader of *A.C.W. Weekly*, are interested in films as films. Assemble a score or so of people who share the same interest. Then study, free, the qualities that earned for a British sponsor, United Steel, the premier award at the Venice International Festival last July (and for the same film, *Stone into Steel*, the Venice diploma for "outstanding technical excellence").

Why, at the Harrogate Film Festival a year earlier, did six out of 25 awards and diplomas go to one unit's films? Find out by picking a programme from that unit's free-loan library (British Transport Films). There is the lyrical *Journey into Spring* to give 22 minutes of sheer pleasure followed by hours of rewarding exploration, with eyes taught

what to look for, of any thicket or stream. And *Between the Tides* from the same library will have the same results when warmer days send your audience, with or without cameras, to the coast.

As an *aperitif* before either of these, try *I Am a Litter Basket* (British Transport again). In the practitioner of special effects its brilliant camera tricks will induce admiration and, maybe, bewilderment; from the student of propaganda there will be chuckles of approval, for never has the litter-lout been so tactfully told to mend his ways; in all, there will be gratitude for seven minutes of fun.

These are typical of that major class of free public-relations films which can confidently be shown to any kind of audience, from the single-minded members of a club whose usual reason for meeting is to keep the right (or left) party in at the next election to such a heterogeneous assembly as the parents, offspring, uncles and aunts at a school social event.

But others prefer, alternatively or additionally, to use the 16mm. projector to deliver a specific message. Whatever it is, some sponsor—a firm, association, government or other official organisa-



Selborne in Hampshire, immortalised by Gilbert White, is the setting of British Transport's outstanding nature film, "Journey into Spring"

tion—can almost certainly supply appropriate films.

Consider, for example, just a few of the ways a projector can serve a church. For most specifically religious films, though not all, a rental must be paid. But the free sponsored film, while not a complete substitute, is a supplement that has proved highly effective when carefully chosen and imaginatively used. The sponsor's reasons for making it are of no account: what matters is how it is introduced and summed up, and even as the text for a sermon it may have a place.

One obvious possibility is an agricultural film shown during the Harvest Festival: Imperial Chemical Industries have a sizeable catalogue devoted to such films, and several of them could give point to an address on the yield of the soil. A degree less obvious is *The Rival World* (sponsored by Shell, obtainable from either Shell-Mex & B.P. or the Petroleum Films Bureau); this is a reminder that the service is one of thanksgiving for the successful outcome of



For boys' clubs, motoring clubs and many other groups, this British Petroleum film is a certain winner. Title: "Tribute to Fangio". Source: free loan from the Petroleum Films Bureau or Shell-Mex & B.P.



"Stone into Steel", voted the outstanding documentary of the 1960 Venice Festival, is one of the free films available from the United Steel Companies

a battle against insect pests, or — another approach — that the battle is sometimes lost, with grim consequences, in less fortunate parts of the world.

And these are not the only hard-won harvests that 16mm. can illustrate. There is coal (in the National Coal Board's large free library), fish (Esso Petroleum's *Hook, Line and Sinker* is a recent addition to a fairly wide range), or timber (Unilever's *The Twilight Forest*, winner of an international grand prix).

Beyond the church walls but within the church organisation (and in numerous secular organisations with similar aims), the scope for material from the sponsored libraries is wide. For, say, the young wives' club there are films on various aspects of domestic science (the Gas Council's *Cooks in Clover* is a new and choice example, and the Electrical Development Association also offers useful and agreeable instruction). For this audience, too, there is sound advice on child care — quite devoid of product-plugging — in several libraries; particularly well covered is oral hygiene in the Dental Board films distributed by Unilever (for these, as for many others, the

Sound-Services\* library is an alternative source).

From young wives to wives-to-be; specially made for teenage girls, and ideal for their half of any youth club, are Unilever's *The Best of Yourself* (on make-up) and *Your Skin* (Venice first prize); for other films for this audience, the Sound-Services catalogue is a good starting point.

Less fortunate, in the sense that no sponsor seems to have made that kind of film for them exclusively, are the boys. Probably the closest male equivalent to *The Best of Yourself* is Gillette's *Only for Men* (G.B. Film Library). Unlike Unilever, this sponsor does not conceal its connection with products relevant to the grooming operations shown on the screen, but if the film comes within what one is tempted to call a close shave of selling too hard, it will nevertheless be well received.

But other suitable programmes are not hard to find. Boys have the tastes of men (lady readers are free to transpose the nouns), and men are the primary target of hundreds of sponsors and thousands of sponsored films. Car rallies and races are among the subjects that, crossing all age barriers, will endear the honorary projectionist to the youth club, motoring club or, indeed, almost any predominantly male group. For thrills on four wheels try Shell-Mex & B.P. and the Petroleum Films Bureau (putting *Tribute to Fangio* and the spectacular *Coupe des Alpes* at the top of the list), then move on to such car firms as Standard-Triumph and Rootes. On two wheels (full-size)? Go to the oil-industry libraries again (Castrol, by the way, have John Surtees).

\* Sound-Services, G.B., and a few others are not themselves sponsors: they run libraries in which sponsors deposit their films for distribution. For each borrowing the sponsor is charged a fee, but to borrowers the films (with a few exceptions) are free.

On two wheels (narrow-gauge)? Lambretta Concessionaires.

What of other sports? Not all are well represented in the free-loan libraries at present, though the gaps are being closed. Subjects that have already received sponsors' attention range from underwater swimming (from Dunlop, which can also supply cycling, tennis and golf) to mountaineering (Norwegian Embassy and the Swiss National Tourist Office, both of which make a small handling charge).

In this survey, the world of sponsored films has barely had its surface scratched; there have merely been pinpricks at a few random points. If this has been useful to readers it has also been unfair to about a thousand sponsors whose names we know but whose films we have had to ignore. Their turn — or that of some of them — will come.

But even from the scanty evidence above, two conclusions can be drawn. First, that possession of a 16mm. sound projector gives access to an extraordinarily rich and varied store of free-loan films. Second, that for this reason projector ownership can be the source of rather special satisfactions. Just what these satisfactions are will depend upon the individual reader. For some, the main pleasure will come from presenting a programme well; for others, from more frequent opportunities for seeing (and sometimes learning from) other people's films; for others, a sufficient reward will be the knowledge that to some section of the community a useful service has been done.

Any of these are good reasons for making use of the sponsored-film libraries — and to be used is what they are for. Find an audience — which means finding, if you don't already belong to one, almost any group of people who meet regularly under a roof. Choose some



Unilever's "The Best of Yourself", a helpful and charming film for teenage girls. A companion film, also on free loan from this library, is "Your Skin".



Car manufacturers, like oil companies, are excellent sources of free travel film. This one (Standard-Triumph's "Return to Kerry") is also a good example of direct 16mm. production, using Ektachrome camera stock and Type 5269 Kodachrome for the prints.

films you think they will like. Offer to put on a show. The offer will seldom be refused; nor, when application is made to the libraries, will the films.

An applicant may be asked how many will attend (but it is best to give this information in advance and, if possible, to apply on the official notepaper of the body for which the show is being planned). He will be expected to agree to three conditions: (a) prompt return of the borrowed prints; (b) no admission charge; (c) acceptance of liability for replacing any damaged footage. The first of these rules is reasonable; the second is a legal necessity for the sponsor (though a few are prepared to waive it if all proceeds go to charity); and the third should not worry A.C.W. readers at all.

Below are the addresses of all the libraries named this week, followed by the prices (if any) of the catalogues they will supply on request. In future issues we shall look further afield and in various ways try to keep readers informed of what is worth their attention and, on occasion, what is not.

Our coverage of the sponsored film will be broad—but not all-embracing, for there would be little point, when so many good films of wide interest are being released, in consuming space on very specialised films that only specialists could obtain. SURGERY no, but FIRST AID

yes; PERSONNEL TRAINING no, but CAREERS GUIDANCE yes; CLASSROOM GEOGRAPHY no, but TRAVEL yes. These are the sort of limits we have in mind; it is for readers to tell us if they are too narrow or too wide.

#### Where to get the Films

AUSTRIAN STATE TOURIST DEPT. (219 Regent Street, London, W.1). *Film list free.*  
BRITISH ELECTRICAL DEVELOPMENT ASSN. (2 Savoy Hill, London, W.C.2). *Catalogue free.*  
BRITISH TRANSPORT FILMS (25 Savile Row, London, W.1). *Catalogue 2s. 6d.*  
CASTROL FILM LIBRARY (Castrol House, Marylebone Road, London, W.1). *Film list free.*  
DUNLOP FILM LIBRARY (Wilton Crescent, London, S.W.19). *Catalogue free.*  
ESSO PETROLEUM CO. (Film Unit, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1). *Catalogue free.*  
GAS COUNCIL (1 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1). *Catalogue free.*  
G.B. FILM LIBRARY (Aintree Road, Perivale, Middx.). *Sponsored catalogue free.*

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (Film Section, Imperial Chemical House, Millbank, London, S.W.1). *Catalogue free.*  
LAMBRETTA CONCESSIONAIRES (Beverley Works, Kingston By-Pass, London, S.W.20). *Film list free.*

NATIONAL COAL BOARD (Film Section, 2 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1). *Catalogue free.*  
PETROLEUM FILMS BUREAU (29 New Bond Street, London, W.1). *Catalogue free.*

ROOTES GROUP FILM LIBRARY (Wilton Crescent, London, S.W.19). *Film list free.*

SHELL-MEX & B.P. (Film Section, Shell-Mex House, Strand, London, W.C.2). *Catalogue free.*

SOUND SERVICES (Wilton Crescent, London, S.W.19). *Catalogue 2s. 6d.*

STANDARD-TRIUMPH SALES (Film Division, Coventry). *Catalogue free.*

SWISS NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE (458 Strand, London, W.C.2). *Catalogue free.*

UNILEVER (Film Section, Unilever House, Blackfriars, London, E.C.4). *Catalogue free.*

UNITED STEEL COMPANIES (The Mount, Broomhill, Sheffield 10). *Leaflets free.*

#### WEEK-END CINE COURSE

under the direction of George Sewell and Julien Caunter. There will be a special class for beginners. Then will follow an analysis of scenes similar to those shot and an editing session, so that students will later be able to edit their own material in accordance with the recommendations made.

Students are invited to bring their own cameras and 25ft. of 8mm. or 100ft. of 16mm. film, and shoot scenes from a prepared script

Details from F. J. North, M.A., Chief Education Officer, Buckingham C.C., County Offices, Aylesbury, Bucks.



Photograph by Courtesy of the Forest of Dean Newspapers Ltd.

## films on coal

A NEW CATALOGUE IS NOW AVAILABLE FROM THE:

Film Librarian  
National Coal Board  
2, Grosvenor Place, London S.W.1

## Making a Start

BY H. A. POSTLETHWAITE

In this series for the beginner the emphasis throughout is on choice of equipment and its use. That is to say, it is entirely devoted to the tools of film making—not to film making itself. Advice on actual production will be frequently given elsewhere in A.C.W.

## How a Cine Camera Works

HAVING made up your mind which gauge you are going to use—8mm., 9.5mm., or 16mm. (and you must do this before you start to look at cameras)—the next thing is to decide which camera will suit you best. But before going into that, let us be clear what a cine camera is.

Any camera—cine or still—consists of a light-tight box (in cine it is usually of metal, for strength) with a lens at one end and some means of holding the film at the correct distance from the lens. There will also be a shutter, which keeps out the light when the camera is not recording a scene, and opens to let the light pass from the lens to the film when an exposure is made. And there must be some device, usually a viewfinder, to enable the user to see the extent of the picture that will be recorded on the film.

In a cine camera there must also be some means of moving the film forward so that, after one frame has been exposed, the film is transported very quickly and another frame brought into position ready for the next exposure, the light from the lens being shut off while the film is being moved. This entails a motor, clockwork or electric, and spools to hold the film before it is exposed and after. Further, so that the user can tell how much of a length of film has been exposed, there must be a device to measure this and a footage indicator to show it.

With most modern cine cameras there is also some guide to the correct exposure to be given according to the brightness of the light falling on the subject. Exposure is controlled by varying the size of the aperture in the lens; when the light is bright, a small aperture is used, and when it is poor the aperture is "opened up" to let more light through. The guide to correct exposure may be merely a chart or table on the side of the camera showing what aperture (usually designated by an "f/number") should be used, or there may be automatic, or semi-automatic, control by means of a photo-electric cell which forms part of the camera. But correct exposure can be determined quite well by means of a separate exposure meter, calculator, or other guide.

Those are the essential parts of a cine camera, and this is how it works: Just behind the lens there is a metal disc

from which half has been cut away; this is the *shutter*. When the exposure button on the camera is pressed, the disc rotates so that the cut-away portion and the opaque portion of the shutter alternate in position behind the lens. Thus light passes to the film, then is shut off, then passes again.

The disc rotates normally 16 times per second, so light passes on to the film for about  $1/32$ nd of a second, is cut off for about  $1/32$ nd, and so on. With some recent cameras this happens 18 times per second, but the difference is negligible; if sound is to be added, the filming speed is 24 to the second, and if the camera has variable filming speeds, these may be faster or slower.

If 64 frames were exposed in a second, for example, instead of 16, the picture when projected would be in slow motion, for the action which took place in one second would be spread over four seconds on the screen. If the camera speed, on the other hand, were 8 frames per second, the result would be accelerated motion.

Behind the shutter is the *gate*, where the film is held in position for the brief period of each exposure. The film has been put in the camera wound on a *spool* from which it is led (*threaded*) to the gate, and it is kept flat in the gate by means of a sprung *pressure plate*; sprung *edge guides* are also provided to prevent it from weaving from side to side.

For the fraction of a second that the shutter is open and the film at rest in the gate, the image of the scene before the camera is recorded; then, as the shutter turns and the light coming through the lens is cut off, the film is moved on so that the next frame comes into position in the gate.

The film is moved on by means of a *claw*, geared so that it functions at precisely the right moment. The claw—which is just what its name implies—engages in one of the perforations of the film, pulls the film down while the light from the lens is cut off, and is then withdrawn ready to engage the next perforation. Each perforation corresponds to one frame.

All this is packed into a very small space, for the distance from the lens to the film in the gate, with the shutter in between, is only  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. for 16mm. film, or

$\frac{1}{2}$ in. for 8mm. film, or slightly less, when normal lenses are used.

After the film has passed through the gate, it is led to the *take-up spool*. With 16mm. cameras this is taken out when full and sent for processing; with 8mm. cameras, after the film has passed through the camera once and exposures made down one half of the film, the spool is turned round and put back for a second run to expose the other half. After that it is sent for processing, when it is slit down the middle and the two halves spliced together to make one continuous length.

In most 16mm. cameras, and in a few 8mm. cameras, the film is fed to the gate, and led on to the take-up spool, over *sprocket wheels* geared to the shutter and claw mechanism. This is an aid to steadiness of the film in the gate. But the absence of sprocket wheels in a camera does not necessarily imply that the picture will be unsteady.

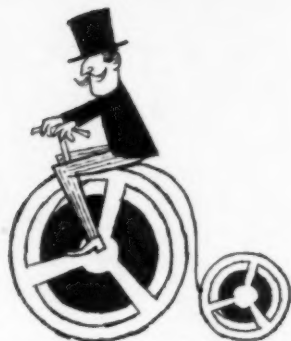
In some other models the film is put into the camera in a *magazine*, which contains the spools, the film gate, and part of the film transport mechanism. Film in magazines is more expensive than on spools, but loading the camera is simplified. A magazine may be removed from a camera when only partly used, e.g., to change from colour to black-and-white or vice versa, in daylight, the partly used magazine being reinstated later. The film is sent for processing in its magazine.

The *motor*, which transports the film and works the shutter and claw, is usually clockwork with a governor to maintain constant speed; but some cameras are driven electrically from a torch battery. This has the advantage that no winding is needed; so long as the battery is in good condition (and it will last a long time) the camera will run whenever the release button is pressed.

Most clockwork motors run for only 25 to 30 seconds without rewinding, and while it is seldom desired to film a shot lasting longer than this, there is always the risk of forgetting to wind between shots.

(Next week: CHOOSING A CINE CAMERA.)

Which particular model should you select? What are the advantages of this and that make?



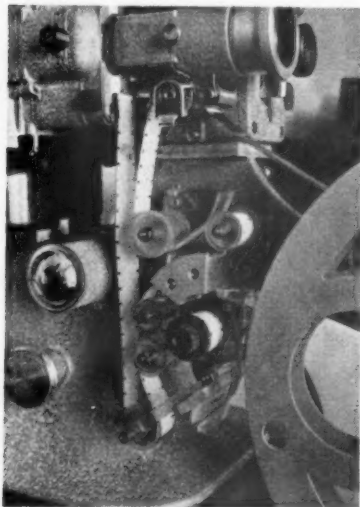


# CORRESPONDENCE

Letters for publication are welcome. Address: A.C.W., 46-47 Chancery Lane, London, WC2

## Adopting the B. & H. 613 to Stripe

HERE is a photograph of my sound stripe record/play-back head assembly fitted to the Bell & Howell 613 projector. Most of the parts are made of Perspex, which is surprisingly easy to work and, of course, is completely non-magnetic. The only metal parts are the heavy roller which is of phosphor-bronze, the magnetic head assembly, and the spindles for the rollers.



The sound head is built on a piece of flat sheet Perspex, which fits on to two  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. dia. studs on the take-up spool arm of the projector. This is a "pull-through" sound head: it is located between the bottom of the picture gate and the bottom sprocket of the projector, and the sprocket pulls the film through the sound head and over the magnetic heads. The Marriott heads are mounted in a block (non-magnetic metal), so that the film meets first the erase head (operative only on record), then the combined record/playback head.

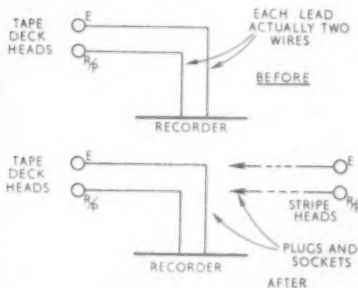
A small felt pressure pad holds the striped film in good contact with the heads; the felt is carried on a Perspex block mounted on a pivoted Perspex arm, and a tiny extension spring along the top of the back-plate keeps the pad pressing on them.

The film path is quite simple. Naturally the film must be pulled very smoothly over the magnetic heads; this depends on the smooth pull of the gear-driven sprocket on the projector, on the true running of the two Perspex idler

rollers, and on the smoothing imparted by the heavy roller round which the film has a large angle of wrap for good grip. I have not found a flywheel necessary, but one could be mounted at the back on an extension of the heavy roller spindle, which runs in miniature ball bearings.

Rather than use a pressure roller to keep the film against the heavy roller, I rely on keeping the film itself taut. There is no free bottom loop in the conventional sense, but instead a Perspex roller on a very lightly sprung arm (elastic band as spring) lies in what would otherwise be the free loop, and it vibrates up and down with the film motion. The lightness of this roller and arm is essential to its proper operation without film damage. Design and construction of the whole unit were facilitated by the ease of sticking Perspex (e.g., with glacial acetic acid or the special Perspex adhesive), and in several places Perspex pieces were stuck to the main plate to make it thicker where required, or to hold the elastic band "spring" on the bottom roller arm.

The unit works in conjunction with my tape recorder, the alterations being shown in diagrammatic form:



A miniature 4-pin socket is mounted on the apparatus and the stripe heads connected. A cable with 4-pin plug at one end, and two jack plugs at the other, makes the connections to the recorder. I found four pins to be necessary as separate earth leads from the two magnetic heads were required. Use of a common earth lead introduced difficulties.

The method of connection I have chosen makes it possible to prepare a master tape, and then by plugging the deck head into the microphone jack socket, one can transfer the tape to stripe, and on my recorder this operation can be monitored.

Cork ARTHUR C. THORNTON,  
B.Sc., M.Inst.C.E.

A number of other photographs testify to the impressiveness of this assembly



## Deadly Climate

HERE in Aden, the shops are full of cine cameras, but the climate is deadly to cine equipment. The ground is made up of fine sand, gypsum and salt, and the air has an average moisture content of 90 deg. so that anything which is taken outside from an air-conditioned building is at once covered by a film of condensed moisture; and all that salt does not help!

Filming is out of the question during the hot season (April to October) not so much because of the heat (I am used to that, my home country being Mauritius) but because of the daily—yes, daily—sandstorms. When the sand or wind do stop blowing it is too dark to do any filming. However, in spite of it all, we have a small cine club and are getting scripts ready for the "cool" season.

I began with a 9.5mm. Pathe Moto-camera in 1952, have since owned a Bell & Howell 624, an Autoload (I took up 16mm. for a few months but found it far too expensive) and later a Bolex C8 with f/1.9 Yvar. I am now the proud owner of a Bolex H8, complete with three lenses.

When A.C.W. was published as a monthly it used to reach us a month late, and as most of the local Arab dealers do not seem to know what they sell, obtaining a copy is, to say the least, a most irritating business, the two most used phrases being "Sold out" and "Come tomorrow", which I was told to do on 18 consecutive days!

Aden. J. R. BOLTON-AUBERT.  
Producing any sort of film at all in such a vile climate must surely be a very considerable achievement, but it is not only the cine club which proves that Aden is not off the map cinematically speaking—the Ten Best have paid a visit there.

## Getting the Best

I HAVE many times proved to myself the folly of buying cheap equipment; though I agree that the dearest is not necessarily the best, yet the best is usually to be found among the dearest.

May I take this opportunity of congratulating you on A.C.W., which I have been reading regularly for over two years now, and which I consider to be well-nigh perfect in content and make-up. The articles are just right, not so technical as to be way above the humble amateur's head, yet not written down to kindergarten level.

Letchworth.

I. N. LAMBERT.  
continued on page 182

## Small Budgets

BY TRADER

### *A London dealer reports regularly on the second-hand and part-exchange market*

TWO screens were offered us in part exchange for later and better models last week. The owners must have paid substantially more than £10 for them, but both screens were in very poor condition. The trade-in price suggested added to the cost of re-surfacing, would have been equal to, if not more than, the wholesale price of a new screen. Anyone contemplating a change of screen would be wise to reconcile himself to the sad fact that a secondhand one has practically no resale or exchange value.

In the accessory line a Zeiss 8mm. Moviscop was offered in exchange by an enthusiast turning over to 16mm. One of the later grey models, we valued it at £20, but the offer was refused, the owner pointing out that he had bought it new (not from our shop) less than two months ago, and that he could not afford to lose almost £20 in so short a time.

The sale of used cine cameras still being rather slow, we are continuing to refuse buying most of the cameras offered to us. However, a Bolex B8L complete with two lenses and case we considered quite a saleable proposition, but our offer was somewhat "restrained" — £45 for the complete outfit. The owner agreed to accept this sum, but the deal fell through because the outfit had not been cleared through the customs.

Two other cameras offered were a pre-war Siemens 16mm. for outright cash and a single run Agfa 8mm. in part exchange. Although Agfacolor is available for both types of cameras, the fact that they use special cassettes made them, we thought, too speculative to take into stock.

Sales of used equipment included another Bell & Howell 624, one of the

earlier models with the f/2.3 lens, the buyer choosing it in preference to a used Brownie selling at £12—£2 cheaper. A surprise item was the sale of one of our used 16mm. magazine models. The customer compared a secondhand Bell & Howell Autoload, which we had marked down to £43, with a pre-war magazine Kodak for which we wanted £25, and chose the latter — against our advice, for it is difficult to get alternative lenses for it.

We could have kicked ourselves when we got a telephone call from a Bolex M8R owner who was searching for a used Synchromat, for a complete outfit had been offered us only a few days earlier, and we had refused it because we thought that the demand was receding in the face of growing competition from stripe attachments.

#### EDWYN GILMOUR SAYS:—

TRADER is quite right. The value of used screens is virtually nil. True, the drop in the prices of new models largely accounts for this, but even before this a screen would have to be in quite perfect order to be worth anything. In the normal course of events the movie maker uses his screen for as long as it will last. If he doesn't take care of it, he can scarcely be surprised if his dealer advises him to write it off.

Trader's offer for the Zeiss Moviscop was certainly reasonable, but the owner really had no need to get rid of it, for the baseboard and winders for the 8mm. and 16mm. models are identical. The viewer alone, new, retails at about £30, so that had Trader offered, say, £15 for the old viewer, the owner would have had to put down only £15 to complete

the deal, saving himself £5. Had this been pointed out to him I should imagine that a sale might well have resulted.

With regard to the Bolex B8L, many people appear to think that, having purchased a camera abroad and taken it with them in and out of this country once or twice, that is sufficient evidence that it is no longer dutiable. But they are quite wrong.

I think that Trader was slightly over-cautious in refusing the 16mm. Siemens and 8mm. Agfa cameras only because of the type of loading they use. For the time being, at any rate, Agfacolor is available in both 16mm. Siemens cassettes and 8mm. single run cassettes, and so long as film is to be had, the cameras are still usable and should therefore be saleable. The situation is very different, however, with a 16mm. cine camera priced at £25 I saw the other day in a London dealer's window. No films have been available for it for twenty years and more!

Which is it to be: Kodak's Brownie or Rank's Sundial? As long as these two admirable cameras remain with us, the argument is likely to continue. It's all a matter of personal choice — and condition. In the case of the two 16mm. cameras, the lower price of the Kodak magazine obviously swayed the decision, but secondhand lenses for this camera are not going to be easy to come by — and the difference in price between C mount lenses and comparable lenses with the Kodak mount might well be quite as much as the difference in the price of the cameras.

Tape couplers seem to be dropping in value doubtless because of increased stripe facilities. Yet there is no doubt at all that the Bolex Synchromat system can produce excellent sound tracks. (Oscar Reisel's 8mm. Ten Best film, *Blind Faith*, was made with one.) There is no reason to believe the enquiry to be other than perfectly genuine, but it is not unknown for friends in league with the owners to try to create a demand!

### *With these gadgets you can produce*

BY EDWIN STEELE

#### A TOTALLY CLOSING IRIS

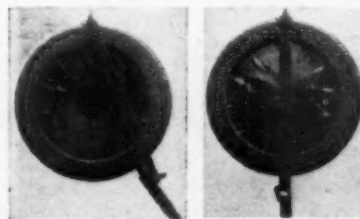
USED discreetly, an iris in and out can be a valuable addition to the effects armoury. It is done by opening and closing down an iris diaphragm in front of the camera lens. But there is a snag: the ordinary iris diaphragm, as sold for microscopy, normally does not stop down completely, but leaves a small hole. It may, however, be readily made totally closing by fitting a piece of black elastic between the lever and a specially positioned pin, so that the elastic comes across the remaining centre hole as the lever reaches its end position.

A filter holder was used to link the iris to the camera lens, with a conical part, made from sheet metal, between it and the iris. The cone may be either brazed or soldered to both iris and filter holder, or if the latter is of aluminium, it can be "glued" with Aradite epoxy resin.

To decide the correct position for the iris, it is essential to view the image directly in the gate. A simple gate viewer can be made from a strip of 16mm. wide matt surfaced celluloid (or Kodaloid), on which is mounted a tiny 45 deg. prism (approx. 5×5mm. side faces ×5mm. deep). The prism is stuck to the glossy side of the matt celluloid, and held in position with polystyrene cement between two turned-up v-cuts. The prism must be so positioned across the film that it lies centrally behind the gate aperture (i.e., it is offset to one side of the strip of celluloid).

After the shutter has been opened by running down the spring, and the pressure plate removed, the celluloid strip (with prism attached) is slid into the film path until the prism is opposite the gate aperture. Using this

simple gate viewer, one determines the best position for the iris, a little way in front of the camera lens. It can be aligned centrally over the frame, and positioned so that when wide open it is quite clear of the corners of the picture. Since it will tend to turn during use, it is not suitable for lenses in which the front portion rotates independently of the body.

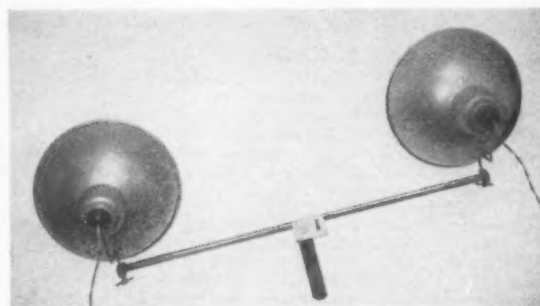


## ACW TEST REPORTS

### Vevo Cine Lighting and Titling Kit

THIS remarkable kit is expressly designed to avoid duplication of parts while giving maximum flexibility at minimum cost. It comprises a complete set of parts to make up any of the following: cine titler, floor lighting stand; table lighting stand; screen stand; pistol grip portable light bar. They are based on aluminium alloy tubes, with a striking anodised green finish, plus well-made fittings, and silver anodised aluminium lamp reflector units on split clamp universal joints. An example of their unique interchangeability is the reflector units, which can be used on the titler, floor stand, table stand or light bar. The tubes can be used on all the units except the table stand, and the ingenious clamps are also interchangeable.

**Horizontal titler:** comprises a title frame, taking 12 x 9in. cards or glass, to which is clamped a pair of 32in. long tubes (1in. dia.) which form the main bed. A rear end support holds the other end of the rods, and the camera carriage clamps anywhere along them, as does



a 32in. long cross tube (which has two adjustable steady feet) supporting the lamp reflector assemblies. A piece of toughened plate glass, with edges ground smooth, is supplied for the title frame.

The 9in. dia. lamp reflectors, satin finished inside, and fitted with B.C. lampholders, suit both No. 1 photo-floods and 100 watt pearl lamps. (The floods are used with colour film, while for black and white either they or 100w. lamps can be employed). On test the reflectors threw a notably even flood of light. The lamps can be positioned as desired, the cross bar holding them being long enough for them to be kept either at 45 deg. from the title centre or even further out where necessary to avoid surface reflections when photographing titles on glass or celluloid. Though they are set somewhat below the average working centre of the title, evenness of illumination is not affected.

The platform has a standard 1in. Whit screw, working in a slot for sideways adjustment of the camera. We feel that a piece of non-slip rubber could usefully be stuck on it to grip the camera firmly without the need for unduly tightening the screw.

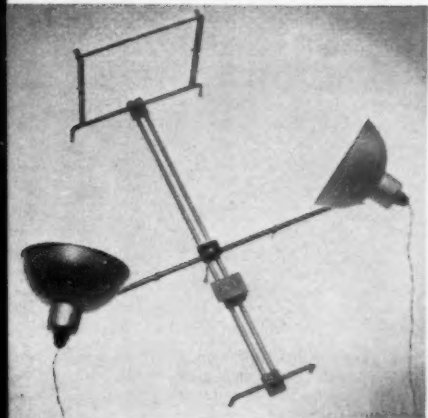
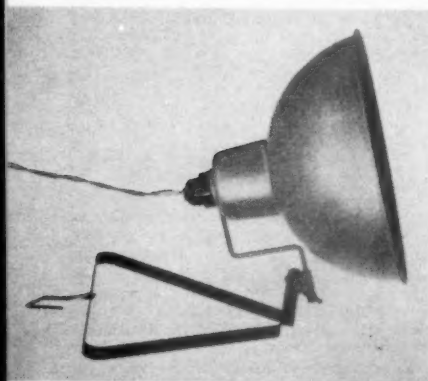
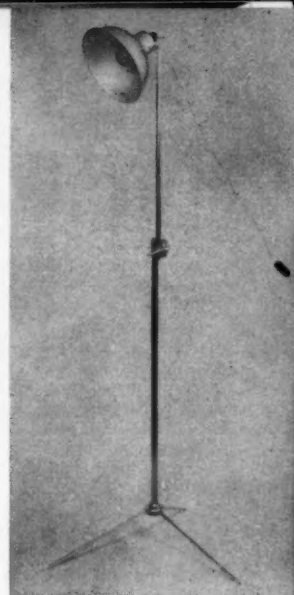
Height adjustment is provided on the title frame by setting a pair of screws in appropriate holes to support the bottom edge of the title. Most cameras are provided for, but with the tallest ones (e.g. Bolex H.16), through-the-frame transparent titles cannot be filmed in the largest sizes because the top bar of the frame would be in the picture. Ordinary titles on cards, or cels against coloured backgrounds, can be photographed without limitation. The camera carriage and lights can be positioned anywhere along the rods, so that any desired size of title up to the maximum width can be used.

The feet at each end serve to align the long tubes when the parts are assembled on a flat surface, and the clamping of the camera carriage and lamp support then finally locks

ABOVE: The table stand holds the lamp reflector unit, which is adjustable on the split clamp mounting. A hook is also provided for hanging.

BELOW: The titler is assembled from parts in the lighting kit.

RIGHT: Floor stand lamp. A clamp holding a 32in. plain tube, to which the lamp reflector assembly is clamped, is fitted to the tubular upright on the Vevo tripod base. The same stand serves as a screen support. BELOW: The portable lighting bar is made up of the central handle and camera platform, clamped to the 32in. long tube, with lamp reflector units on each end.



the whole unit together and gives the necessary stability to prevent any skewing of the camera due to the natural slight flexibility of the metal; but care must be taken to see that the surface on which the unit rests is indeed flat. No provision is made for replacing the camera in a pre-set position on the carriage, so it must be lined up optically each time before use.

**Floor lighting stand:** based on a well-made lower section with chrome-plated tripod base and 32in. long stout (1in. dia.) upright tube. One or more tube clamp units are added to hold

#### Accessories

	Price
A Silver anodised reflector unit with lamp holder, ring and clamp, 3ft. flex and 2 pin plug, wired ... ..	15s.
B As above but with 9ft. flex; no plug ... ..	15s. 9d.
C Anodised reflector only ... ..	8s. 8d.
D Lamp holder, ring and clamp ... ..	3s. 9d.
E 24 x 1in. anodised tube ... ..	3s. 11d.
F 32 x 1in. anodised tube ... ..	4s. 11d.
F1 32 x 1in. anodised tube with 2 adjustable feet ... ..	6s. 5d.
G Tube clamps complete ... ..	3s. 9d.
H Table stand base, black japanned ... ..	3s.
I Pistol grip, satin chrome and natural wood ... ..	8s. 3d.
J Tripod base and 32in. upright, anodised ... ..	22s. 6d.
K Titler frame ... ..	33s. 5d.
L Camera carriage ... ..	5s. 8d.
M Rear end support ... ..	4s. 2d.
N Toughened glass screen ... ..	7s. 6d.
O Screen support pillar only, anodised ... ..	4s.

#### PARTS FOR EACH UNIT

CINE TITLER: 2A, 2F, 1F1, 1K, 1L, 1M, 1N, 1G, 1 Multi plug and 9ft. flex with 2 pin plug.

LIGHTING STAND add 1J, 1E, 1G.

TABLE STAND add 1H.

SCREEN STAND add 1O.

LAMP BAR add 1I.

Price of complete kit: £7 12s. 6d.



the extension tubes (32in. long x 1in. dia.) and the lamp reflector unit clamps on at the desired height. The clamps can be arranged to hold the upper tube(s) either vertically or at an angle for a boom lamp. In the latter case, the lightness of the parts makes a counterweight unnecessary. Lamp adjustment is from ground level to 7ft.

Two or more reflectors can be clamped to the tube, close in, so that they become almost one source. Incidentally, the lampholder recess really is large enough for one's fingers to reach the screwed ring—a point to watch when choosing reflectors of any sort. The bracket attaches to the rod with the split clamping block and sensibly proportioned T-bar locking nut. A 3ft. length of flexible 2-core twisted plastic insulated cable is supplied, with a 2-pin 5amp. plug which fits into a 2-way adaptor on a longer mains lead. Plastic (insulating) lampholders are used. The tripod base consists of three plated rods (they fold up instantly for storage) with ball-shaped ends held in a machined fitting at the bottom of the main tube.

**Table stand:** comprises a 9in. wide triangular base, made of 1in. wide stout steel strip, with black japanned finish. The base carries a short vertical member with a stud for attachment of the split clamp reflector holder. The same reflector assembly is used as for the other units. The stand can be stood on any flat surface, or hung by the chrome-plated hook.

**Screen stand:** the floor lighting stand minus the lamp reflector assembly, the upper tube(s) set vertical, and the screen support pillar fitted into the top. The pillar is simply a 12in. long tube, with end spigot to fit into the upright 1in. tube on the stand, and with a hook at the upper end for the screw. In a somewhat draughty room the screen, just hanging from the hook, tended to swing, and it says much for the versatility of this kit that we were able promptly to clamp on a cross rod to rest against the bottom of the screen and hold it quite still.

**Pistol grip portable light bar:** taking the 24in. long 1in. dia tube, one slides a handle unit on to the centre of the tube and clamps it in place. A lamp reflector is then clamped on each end. Result: a portable light bar. The handle unit comprises a 4in. long varnished hardwood handle with 4 x 2in. camera platform attached, the front carrying a split clamp for attachment of the tube that holds the lamps. A 1in. Whit camera screw is fitted. The unit is surprisingly light and looks a well-finished, workmanlike job.

## Lamp-o-Matic Surge Reducer

As is well known, the filament of a lamp has a much lower resistance cold than when hot, so when a cold lamp is switched on, there is a surge of current through the low resistance filament of the order of 15 to 20 times the normal. Hence momentary stresses are set up which sometimes cause the filament to fail or blow at the instant of switching on. The Lamp-o-Matic surge-reducing device works by including a resistance in circuit when the lamp is switched on, then—after a delay of a couple of seconds—shorting across the resistance by means of an automatic time-switch of the thermal delay type.

Two models are available: Type A for 300/500 watt lamps, and Type B for 750/1,000 watt, both for use on 200-250v. mains. When the projector is fed via a transformer (e.g. for 110v.), the unit is wired into the primary (mains) side of the transformer. It consists of a well-made metal case, 5 1/4 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 in. high, with a sloping front carrying a 5 amp. 3-pin socket (shuttered type for safety), and a 1ft. length of 3-core cable for plugging into the mains. The box contains a resistance, resembling a short (3 1/2 in.) electric fire element, and the neat thermal delay switch device which cuts the resistance out of circuit after a couple of seconds.

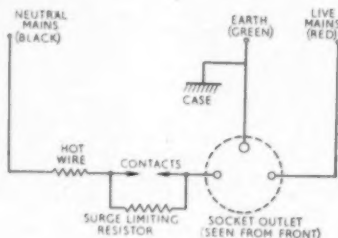
The Lamp-o-Matic is suitable for slide, as well as silent and sound cine projectors, the mains passing through it on its way to the projector or step-down transformer. In the case of a cine projector, the resistance is therefore in circuit with the motor (and the amplifier, in the case of a sound projector). However, the nature of a resistance is such that it drops the voltage only in proportion to the current passing through it. The motor and amplifier take relatively little current, so they cause very little voltage drop, hence the motor and amplifier are barely affected.

The plug-in thermal delay switch incorporates a fixed and a moving contact, the latter being held slightly away from the fixed one by a length of special wire. When heated by sufficient current passing through it, this hot-wire expands, and allows the moving contact to rest against the fixed one.

The action is completely automatic: when carrying the relatively small current for the projector motor (and amplifier, in the case of a sound projector), the contacts of the hot wire relay are apart. When the lamp is switched on, the total current is enough for the special wire

to heat up and expand. So the contacts "make", shorting out the resistance and feeding full mains voltage from the socket-outlet.

Our first test on the Type B was with a 1,000 watt mains (240v.) voltage lamp, which came up to full brightness after two or three seconds. After switching off, it needed only a few seconds for the hot-wire to cool and open the contacts again before the unit was ready for further use. Next came a test with a 750 watt lamp, and here again the device prevented the initial surge of current at the switch-on.

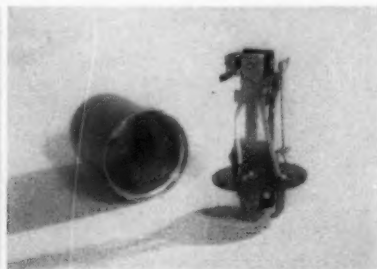
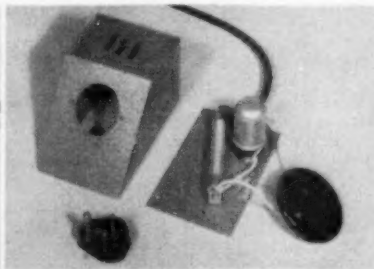


Lamp-o-Matic circuit

It is interesting to examine the degree of surge reduction in this typical case. The measured resistance of the 240v. 750w. lamp when cold was 50hms. Applying 240v. across this resistance, then calculating by Ohms Law, we find the current flow into this cold lamp to be 48 amps.—a surprisingly high figure. Of course, immediately the filament begins to heat up, the amps. begin to fall, until in a fraction of a second the lamp has reached its full working temperature, and the current flow is  $750/240 = 3.2$ amps. (normal running current for this lamp).

Adding the Type B, its resistance of 250hms. would be in series with the resistance of the cold lamp at the switch-on, so the initial current would be  $240/(5 + 25) = 8$ A. This obviously is a much lower amperage than the 48A. without the surge reducer, and greatly reduces the thermal shock when switching on.

Our third test was to see if wattages below 750 might be enough to allow the hot-wire to operate the contacts. A 500 watt mains voltage lamp was used, and this (correctly) did not cause the contacts to close and cut out the



LEFT: Lamp-o-Matic Surge Reducer. The projector or transformer plugs into the socket on the front. CENTRE: The resistance element in series with the feed to the projector greatly reduces the surge when the lamp is switched on. The thermal delay switch, enclosed in the small can (top right), shorts out the resistance after a delay of 2 to 3 seconds. RIGHT: Plug-in time switch device, showing the hot wire (at right) which expands when heated by current passing through it and allows the contacts to "make".



resistance, indicating that the hot-wire is correctly rated.

The unit was then tested under typical working conditions with a 750 watt Bell & Howell sound projector. It was plugged into the mains, the cable to the transformer primary plugged into the socket, and projector connected normally to the transformer. There was a slight (and unimportant) drop in motor speed. The lamp came up to full brightness in some 2½ sec., and the motor thereupon ran at normal speed. Clearly this was giving effective surge reduction—measurement showed it to be equivalent to starting the lamp on little more than half its normal voltage. During the couple of seconds of reduced voltage there is inevitably a drop in sound output from the amplifier, but this does not matter, for one hardly ever needs to keep the sound going (e.g. from gram) when starting the projector.

We have not had the opportunity of testing the unit with an induction motor powered machine, but we are informed that it operates perfectly satisfactorily with every type of machine in use today. The 750/1,000 watt model is also suitable for 1,250 watt lamps. For the R.C.A. machine, the induction motor of which has a heavier-than-average current consumption, a specially adjusted time switch is supplied on request. The makers state that they can adapt it for D.C. mains if required by adjusting the thermal switch.

On any projector one would naturally wish to have a surge reducer on only the lamp, not the motor and—in a sound machine—the amplifier. That ideal could only be achieved by building a surge reducer into the projector itself. Being used simply in the mains lead supplying the projector, the Lamp-o-Matic achieves the nearest possible thing to the ideal, without fuss and at remarkably little cost—less, in fact, than the cost of one of the higher wattage lamps.

Price: £2 5s. (Submitted by Educational Foundation for Visual Aids, 33 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1.)

### BAIA BANTAM DRY FILM SPLICER

WEIGHING only one ounce and its overall dimensions no more than 2½ x 1½ x 1½ in—that is to say, it is scarcely larger than an ordinary matchbox—the Baia Bantam dry film splicer for 8mm. and 16mm. is well named. Strongly and accurately made of aluminium, it is in three sections, hinged together at the back. The bottom section, which has two holes in the base for fixing-screws, forms a box in which a supply of joining tapes can be kept; when the lid of the box is closed, its top, which is fitted with register pins, becomes the working surface. The two ends of film to be joined are placed on the register pins and are trimmed simultaneously along the frameline by a cutting blade mounted in the top flap of the splicer. The two films are spliced by sticking perforated self-adhesive strips across the join, one strip on each side of the film.

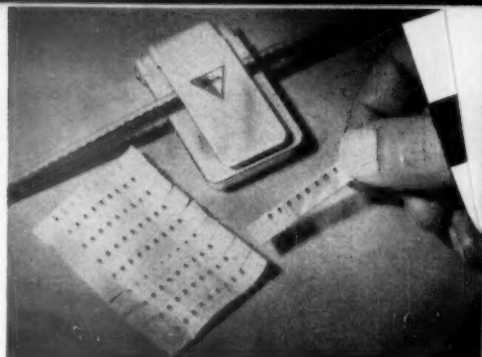
The register pins are of 16mm. spacing, and the cutting blade is long enough to enable the splicer to be used with 16mm. film, for which suitable splicing tapes are also available. An interesting point is that the Bantam splicer is excellent for joining "16mm." Perforata, too, though it is not suitable for the new Cinetape A. Only one joining strip is needed for tape, of course, and the excess width can easily be

trimmed off after the join has been made.

Although the single cutter, mounted in the top flap of the splicer, looks as if it could give one a nasty cut if one accidentally knocked one's fingers against it, this is not, in fact, the case, and the blade is perfectly safe—as was established by a series of progressively bolder tests! Yet there is no difficulty in cutting the film, and the efficiency of the blade had not noticeably deteriorated even after many hundred test cuts had been made.

Tapes for use with the Bantam are made of Mylar, and are available at 6s. for 36 splices. As with most other tapes sold for film splicing, it is claimed that the splices are stronger than the film itself and that they are not affected by heat.

Tape splices are frequently satisfactory, but just for the record, both of these claims are misleading. Test joins on 8mm. film came apart when subjected to a strain of about seven pounds—not, it is true, because the Mylar strips broke, but because the adhesive gave way. Also, it was found that after tape joins had been run through the projector a few times with the lamp on, the adhesive was weaker and gave way more easily. It proved most inadvisable to project a single frame near



a tape splice, since the concentrated heat simply caused the join to drop apart in next to no time.

But these tests, especially the last, were somewhat drastic, and the results are similar with other sorts of dry splice as well. Hence they should not be considered as in any way detracting from the high quality of the Baia Bantam, which would seem to be a really excellent buy. Price: 16s. 6d. (Submitted by Cine Accessories (Brighton) Ltd.)

## Look! (SAYS DOUBLE RUN) No Script!

As you will doubtless have noticed from the correspondence pages recently, I have been taken to task by James Wood for advocating unplanned films. In fact, I didn't and wouldn't. He is confusing unscripted films with unplanned ones, and there is all the difference in the world between them. My holiday film, like so many, just couldn't be scripted in advance for I did not know what to expect. So I worked out a plan as I filmed, ending up, as I have already explained, with a record of a single day.

"An unplanned film," I would agree with Mr. Wood, "can seldom be more than a series of animated snapshots", but planning—except for more ambitious story films—need not take the form of a script. It is best done before filming, but opportunities can be lost if one does not seize them at once. If, later, such shots cannot be fitted in, one just has to discard them, and this explains some of the "appalling wastage" to which Mr. Wood refers.

But eleven reels reduced to four seem to me a very reasonable cutting ratio if you want unselfconscious shots of people suitable for showing to outside audiences. In point of fact, I don't use much less film even when working to a script. If Mr. Wood retains more of what he shoots, I wonder if it could be that his films feature places rather than people. The behaviour of scenery is much more predictable than that of human beings! But I like to film people, to catch them off-guard and show them as they really are. To do this you have to shoot off quite a lot more material than you intend to use, but I

would not call the film that ends up in the waste-paper basket "an appalling waste". Rather is it the price of quality.

As for the superiority of (some) planned films over scripted ones, may I suggest examples from my own experience? They happen to be 16mm. films but, of course, gauge is quite irrelevant here: compare *Early One Morning* (1 reel s.o.f., available on hire from the Boy Scouts Association and Wallace Heaton), a scripted film, with *Claremont* (1 reel s.o.f. from the B.F.I.), a completely unscripted one, or *Summer Holiday* (1 reel s.o.f., available on free loan from the British Diabetic Association, 152, Harley Street, London, W.1), a partly scripted film, with *The Challenge* (1 reel s.o.f., also available on free loan from the British Diabetic Association), an entirely unscripted one. I'm not saying that unscripted films are always more successful than the scripted, but certainly they can be—provided, of course, they are properly planned.

### THREE MOANS

By and large one gets good service from dealers, so in indulging myself with three moans I must add that they don't apply to everyone. Moan the first: why must some young assistants blandly announce that such and such is quite unobtainable when you know perfectly well that it is readily available?

Moan the second: there is a cine book that sells for 35s. For the past year, a shop I know has insisted on selling it for 38s. 6d., and nothing I or

*continued on page 183*

## The Problem of Handling Crowds

Just one of the posers that is not solved by *Spartacus*.

BY LIA LOW

SOMETIME during the 'thirties, a cinema manager, tired of the current spate of costume romances, wrote to ask his distributors not to send him any more films "in which the hero signs his name with a feather". By now there must surely be a renter who is making a similar objection to films in which the hero wears a brass skirt.

*Spartacus* (opening in selected cinemas in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Bristol, etc., during last week of February; Super Technirama 70) is yet another nugget from the well-worked lode that runs a few decades either side of A.D.1. The film is based on the true story of the gladiator who escaped from servitude, founded a democratic colony of freed slaves, was defeated and crucified by the Romans (and eventually became one of the heroes of the Communist pantheon).

So much is true, and this strange historical episode seemed likely to make a more interesting film than the usual run — something that would contain substance and inspire imaginative direction. Perhaps for once we should miss the Bronx centurion, the crowds (was the ancient world really so over-populated?) and the nightshirted dignitaries saying "Hail!" to each other in the municipal baths.

The hope was borne out by sophisticated titling, but no further. For the opening shot was — a milling crowd. Here was a crowd of slaves scurrying about a quarry, but thanks to weak assis-



Kirk Douglas exhorts an army of slaves to march on Rome. Here they have a focus for their attention, but when crowds just mill around they've got to look gainfully occupied if they are to be at all convincing.

tant direction, looking extremely ineffectual about it; if extras have to be used in numbers, they must be made to look gainfully occupied, and any failure to do so is surprisingly evident on the screen.

Among the slaves is Kirk Douglas, with the jaw-clenched grimness which serves him for an expression throughout the film. As he is carrying a basket of stones uphill, he bumps into another slave carrying a basket of stones downhill, bites a guard in the calf, and is condemned to death. Only the arrival of Peter Ustinov as a gladiator-farmer saves him — and very nearly the film.

For most of the film's entertainment is due to three performances — by Ustinov, Sir Laurence Olivier as the patrician general who eventually defeats Spartacus, and Charles Laughton as his rival in the Roman Senate. They are three highly idiosyncratic performances by accomplished actors who have realised — rightly — that the interpretation they give of their parts will have little bearing on the development of the story, and have decided to ad-lib it for laughs (Ustinov), try a few new and old mannerisms (Olivier), or just take it easy (Laughton). The result is more interesting than the real business of the film.

Also present are Jean Simmons as the wife Spartacus acquires in the gladiator school, John Gavin as Julius Caesar (why?) and Tony Curtis, who escapes from being Laurence Olivier's slave

to do conjuring tricks for Spartacus.

Spartacus is eventually defeated in a battle which owes what excitement it has to *Henry V* and never pays it back. Here again, the inevitable hordes of extras — very obviously local talent — are clearly looking forward to free cokes and hamburgers rather than death and slavery.

The Technirama camera, designed at the Technicolor factory, uses a negative two and a half times the area of an ordinary ciné frame. From this negative 35mm. and 16mm. prints can be made, though the films *Solomon and Sheba* and now *Spartacus* are being shown at cinemas which can project 70mm. prints. The prefix "Super" also refers to the projection — an even larger and deeper screen, with six-track stereo sound.

Intelligent use is made of the process and its deep-focus possibilities in *Spartacus*: interest is frequently centred on the far distance, over the shoulders of characters in the foreground, who are still in focus. This gives an impression of seeing the spectacle from a ring-side seat in the arena, though one does not at any point feel that one is watching a twelve-million-dollar spectacle, which is what the film is claimed to have cost.

Apart from taking full advantage of the process, pleasing colour, and some good shots of faces and episodes in the crowd, Stanley Kubrick's direction has not inspired much interesting camera-work.



Nina Foch, Roman thrill-seeker, gives the sign for negro gladiator Woody Strode to despatch Kirk Douglas in the arena.

## CHOOSING A TAPE RECORDER

"Which?" survey is detailed but not exhaustive

CHOOSING a recorder is a very difficult business now that there are so many makes on the market, and reliable guidance is often hard to come by. Prospective buyers will therefore probably be interested to know that the January issue of *Which?* contains a test report on recorders, the thoroughness and unbiased nature of which make it extremely valuable.

Of the 180 or so models available, only eighteen were tested, and of necessity many well known types had to be left out. Also the report deals with the recorders in general terms and makes no reference to their suitability for cine work — or, indeed, for any other specialised purpose. But the sample tested was well chosen, and the report makes up in depth for what it lacks in breadth.

All the recorders underwent a subjective listening test, and were aged for the equivalent of a hundred hours' use. Before and after this ageing, each was tested for wow and flutter, long term speed stability, and signal/noise ratio. Distortion and power output were measured after ageing, and matters such as sensitivity, erase head efficiency, tape tension on braking, switch mechanism, internal wiring, and the strength of the case and chassis were gone into. Ease of operation, versatility, and safety were also assessed, and all the results collected into four tables. At the end of every table, each recorder is given a comparative rating, and the overall results suggest that of the recorders tested, the best were:

At about £85, the Ferrograph 4 AN/1  
£60, the Brenell Three Star,  
and Phillips EL3542  
£45, the Grundig TK 20  
£40, the Cossor CR 1602.

which is considered the overall best buy, and (surprise, surprise!) the Simon Minstrelle. The Telefunken 75K-15, at about £55, leads the runners-up.

Even people who don't happen to fancy any of the makes tested may nevertheless find the report of value, for it gives a very good indication of what to look for when choosing a recorder, and it makes a number of points of general application. For instance, it is emphasised that, in choosing a recorder one must be guided by the purpose for

which it is to be used; secondly, that the results depend a good deal on the microphone and speaker used with it, and that those supplied with the machine may not do it justice; and thirdly, that as a rule, the recorders that came out best in the subjective listening test were those that did not have a high frequency response — for example, the Brenell Three Star got a rating of "Excellent" on the listening test, but only "Very Poor" on overall frequency response. In other words, high frequency response tends to be achieved at the expense of good recording quality.

Another point which is to be inferred, though it is not specifically stated, is that not all recorders of the same type are equally satisfactory, and this means that it is quite likely that individual experience may not square up with the *Which?* report. It is interesting to note that whereas five of the recorders tested have Collaro Studio decks, the mechanical performance of these machines as summarised in the tables varies considerably, nor is one deck consistently better than the others. For instance, four of these machines got a rating of "Good" for maintenance of tape tension on braking, while the fifth got only "Fair". For wow and flutter, some were "Fairly Good", and others "Poor"; for long term tape error, the ratings ranged from "Good" to "Poor".

I thought it a pity that more stress was not laid on the fact that many different sorts of recorders have identical decks, and often identical or very similar microphones. Obviously people want to buy complete recorders and would be only more bewildered than ever if they were told that a particular machine had a good deck but a poor amplifier or vice versa, so that some sort of overall rating is certainly desirable. But in view of the fact that only a very small sample of the recorders available was tested, it would have been useful had the component parts been separately treated in addition. All points connected with the decks could have been listed in one table, all those connected with the amplifiers in another, and so on; this would have increased the value of the report, since it would have given prospective buyers something to go on when considering machines other than those reviewed.

But even as they stand, the tables are most useful and revealing. It is to be

hoped that in due course we shall have a further survey, dealing with battery recorders in the same penetrating, meticulous way.

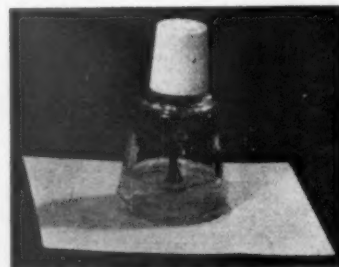
### Sound Effects on Tape

THE OTHER day I had a card from Mr. H. M. Hood, of Dartford, Kent, who had seen my despairing paragraph about the lack of Sound Effect libraries. He wrote to tell me that he knew of a firm selling effects on tape. So I contacted the firm, Sound Recordings Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 Hathaway Hamlet, Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick., and received their catalogue of "Tape-sounds". These sound effects, in most cases genuine recordings, not studio fakes, are available on tape only, at playing speeds of 3½ or 7½ ips, as required. Each effect lasts from thirty to sixty seconds according to the subject, and all items cost the same, 12s 6d. If longer lengths of a particular effect are wanted, these can be made up to special order for an extra charge.

The catalogue lists about three hundred effects and contains all the standard items, as well as many unusual ones, such as the call of a toucan. Supplementary catalogues of new effects are to be issued every six months, and the firm will be pleased to quote for making special recordings to customers' specifications, though this is naturally bound to be a fairly costly business. It is good to know that recorded effects are once again available, and I wish Tapesounds all success. Long may they last!

### DON'T SPILL THE CEMENT!

IF you have ever knocked over a bottle of film cement you will know what a nasty mess it makes; and that, by the way, is a good reason for spreading a newspaper on the table when splicing. A dodge to avoid spills is to glue the base of the bottle, using Evostick, to a small piece of card.



The bottle illustrated is not that in which the cement was bought—it originally held nail varnish—but it has three advantages: it is wider at the base and therefore steadier; the small brush affixed to the cap is much better for applying cement than the glass rod usually supplied; and by pouring the cement into this small bottle the level can be kept just a fraction of an inch above the tip of the brush so that it comes out with exactly the amount of cement you need for a clean join.



## The 9.5mm Reel

BY CENTRE SPROCKET

### EDITING OUTFIT FROM BARGAIN ITEMS

MR. BRADBURY of Sheffield, a nine-fiver of over twenty years' standing, writes to say that he has considered changing to 8mm., but "just cannot tolerate those fuzzy little pictures (even if they are coloured)", and doesn't see the point "of paying all that extra cash to go bigger for results that are not a ha'porth better" than he can get with his Motocameras. The camera he tried was cumbersome, and all the "babies" too light to be of much use for hand-held shots. He likes to use a tripod whenever possible.

When 9.5mm. stock was virtually unobtainable and no filming could be done, he overhauled some of his prints and gear and planned new gadgets and films. In his experience, nine-fivers are generally more technically adroit than users of the other gauges. Perhaps that is why they chose 9.5mm! But one doesn't always have to make-do and contrive. The photographs show a splicer and spools bought brand new for a matter of a few shillings and pence respectively from well-known dealers. They were cheap because they are discontinued lines, and similar bargains can quite often be picked up, even from dealers who no longer stock 9.5mm., for they probably did once and now seem quite happy to clear their stockrooms at near give-away prices.

The rewind arms are ex-Govt. surplus. Originally made for 8mm., 9.5mm. and

16mm., they are now obtainable only with the 16mm. parts. However, the 9.5mm. spool holders are quite easy to make and are here shown in use.

The spindles are cut from a length of 7/32in. long silver steel rod threaded 1/4in. B.S.F. from one end. It would save trouble if 7/32in. B.S.F. or Whitworth bolts were used with their own nuts, of course, but unhappily this size is very difficult to obtain.

The existing knurled nut with the rewind arms will fit the spindles supplied for 16mm. and those made for 9.5mm. if a cut is made the length of the thread. The nut being somewhat smaller than 7/32in., one can press the two halves of the threads together, thus decreasing the diameter of the rod so that the nut can be screwed home. It has the additional advantage that the tendency of the two prongs to spring apart holds the nut in place, it will not, therefore, unscrew when the rewind is in use.

The boss is cut from 1/4in. diameter steel, brass or aluminium rod 1/4in. long. If steel or brass is used, the boss may be soldered to the spindle, but aluminium will not solder and must be pinned. To do this, drill a 1/16in. hole right through the boss and spindle, and rivet in a length of 1/16in. silver steel rod cut just a fraction longer than the diameter of the boss. I usually force the rod through until it is flush with the metal one end, and use a pair of side-cutting pliers to



*Geared arm with 9.5 mm. part fitted.*

cut the other end as closely as possible. This leaves just the right amount for riveting.

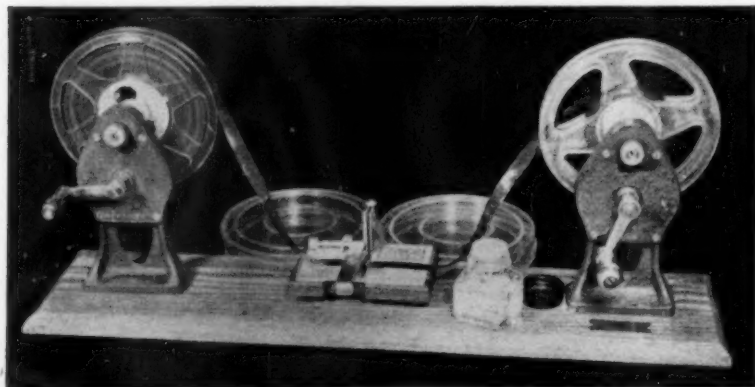
The spool driving pin is made from 1/4in. length of 5/32in. silver steel rod. If the hole to accept it is drilled very carefully, the rod is usually such a tight fit that it much be forced in and requires no further fixing. The driving cotter for the spindle is cut from 7/32in. inside diameter brass tubing to the shape shown, and soldered tight against the boss.

The spool retaining clip is cut from brass sheet and riveted into a cut in the spindle end. Both this cut and the one in the other end of the spindle are best made with a hacksaw and then cleaned up with a flat needle file. These little files cost only a few pence and look so fragile, but they are surprisingly robust and are capable of cutting quite tough steel. A set of different shapes is invaluable to the handyman cinematographer. The clips are also riveted with 1/16in. silver steel, the rivets being hammered sufficiently tight to hold the clip in position, but loose enough to allow it to be turned to release the spool.

As this particular rewind unit was intended for use with an editor, a further modification was required. Normally the rewinds are fitted with one geared arm and one idler arm, and the film can be wound only one way. However, a second incomplete unit was obtained at the same time as the one shown, and the geared arm fitted in place of the idler.

#### SPEED RATINGS

WHAT speed rating do you use? B.S. or A.S.A.? I am a little disturbed by the increasing tendency in so many articles and specifications to give only A.S.A. ratings. This may possibly be of some small advantage to the still photographer,

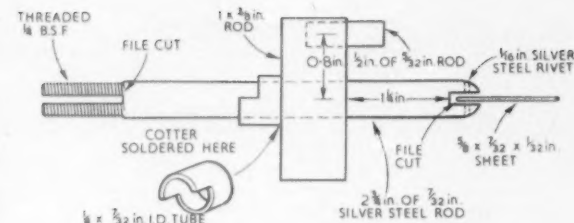


*Rewind with home-made 9.5 mm. parts. The left-hand idler arm has been replaced by a geared arm to enable the unit to be used for editing.*





16 mm. and 9.5 mm. parts shown with the knurled knob which fits either. Behind them is the idler arm which has been replaced.



Detail of 9.5 mm. parts and of the drive cotter.

but it doesn't help the movie maker. The A.S.A. rating is doubled as the film speed is doubled—a good, simple system provided the speed is, in fact, doubled. But what increase in speed is represented by a change from 25 to 42 A.S.A.? Work it out and you won't find the answer of much use, for it is the change in expo-

sure that counts, and what change does 1 A.S.A. indicate? How much simpler to remember that 1 deg. B.S. represents a change in exposure of one-third of a stop! In cine one usually uses the diaphragm, not the shutter speed for exposure control, and colour film has a latitude of about one-third of a stop.

So the B.S. log system fits very neatly.

Of course, none of this matters if one carries a pocket calculator in the shape of an exposure-meter, for then it is simply a case of what one is used to. But try giving the A.S.A. man an unfamiliar film to use when he has left his meter at home!

This admirable guide was popped anonymously in the post and popped out just as anonymously in the Grasshopper Group's Newsletter. Stuart Wynn Jones, the Editor, says he is as mystified as we pretend to be over the identity of the author.

## You, Too, Can Make a Free Cinema Smash Hit!

OVER the past couple of years the Free Cinema movement has more or less fizzled out and so at last is beginning to make its appearance in the more sophisticated amateur circles. Articles in the amateur cine press have begun to adopt a slightly hectoring "You-can't-think-what-to-film-Good-God-man-get-out-in-the-streets-and-use-your-eyes" approach, and it is a pretty safe bet that films incubated in the cosy glow of this particular up-to-the-minute brand of sentimentality will form an ever-increasing proportion of the winners of That Competition which is such a good advert for You Know What Magazine.

Aspiring readers may have been misled into thinking that Free Cinema is by nature an informal field of movie-making requiring the little touch of genius to transform the humble everyday into a beautiful truth. This is not so. The amateur who wants to get into the swim while the going is still good has only to follow a few simple rules in order to achieve success, and it is with him in mind that the following guide is offered.

### Free Cinema Films

THE term "Free Cinema" has, in its time, covered a multitude of sins, but the sub-species which can be most profitably attempted by the amateur can be classified as follows:

#### (1) *The Salt of the Earth Performing Their Honest Toil.*

The field is still wide open here (engine-drivers and vegetable-market por-

ters should, however, be avoided). The important thing is that the Honest Toil chosen should be manual and very dreary. The subjects of all films in this category should look as though they earn less than £750 p.a., or there is a strong risk that they will lose the audience's sympathy. This, of course, is fatal.

#### (2) *The Salt of the Earth in Pursuit of Their Simple Pleasures.*

This embraces day-trip-to-the-seaside, sing-songs-in-the-pub, Sunday-in-the-park, rides-on-the-dodgems, and such like. The pleasures can safely be made more vicious if, again (as in (1)), the participants do not look too well-off.

#### (3) *The Teenagers Enjoying Themselves in Their Own Way.*

This, to some extent, overlaps with (2) above. It must be realised at once, however, that if you want to be one step ahead of the other fellow, the Teenagers-Living-in-Dance-Hall film is a dead duck. The close-ups of swirling skirts and selected details of the so-amusing band are already hardened clichés and so are understandably very popular with serious amateurs. The Frank-and-Uninhibited angle, though, is worthy of further exploration. Teenage sex has for too long been the prerogative of shabby West End cinemas and, suitably dignified, could make a very O.K. subject.

### Some General Rules

1. All Free Cinema-type films, it goes without saying, should be in muddy black and white (never, never in colour)

2. Remember that the N.F.T.-type of audience that you have in mind will enjoy a film much more if allowed to feel slightly patronising towards the people depicted. This is why nobody makes Free Cinema films about bank managers, for example.

3. Work in glancing references to one or more of the following O.K. themes:

- (a) War is Hell
- (b) Nuclear war is even more Hell
- (c) The colour problem

For example, suppose that you wish to indicate you are aware of, say, theme (c). It will be sufficient to show, in your outdoor crowd scenes, a good sprinkling of close-ups giving prominence to coloured people—either in groups or singly in the middle of a group of white people, rather conspicuously.

4. Suitable soundtracks can be divided into three main types: (a) Naturalistic background noises (make sure someone is whistling in the background). (b) Discussions of one or more of the O.K. themes mentioned above, rather mumbled and with one or two swear words. (c) Deafening jazz music from start to finish ("When the Saints Come Marching In," however, is by general agreement reserved for films of Nuclear Disarmament rallies).

With these few precepts to guide him, the intelligent amateur will soon begin to regard his camera as an Instrument of Self-Expression and not just as a means of providing rather feckless amusement for himself, his friends and audiences who should know better.

## BEWARE THESE HACKNEYED TREATMENTS!

WAY back in 1920 the cinema trade press hit on the adjective "pedestrian" and so freely applied it to run-of-the-mill feature films that directors must have come to dread it — then as now, for it is still widely used. It manages to connote technical competence while suggesting that the director could have done better; to me it suggests the stodgy and the uninspired. Oddly enough, the trade press never seem to apply it to the story or the script — only to the direction.

Having grown up with the word ringing in my ears, and aware both that I may be misinterpreting it and that far too few amateur directors bother to assess professional directors' work, I have recently been asking others for examples of it.

Example 1 was the familiar "series of three or four shots, each at least ten seconds, establishing a sinister character lurking in a wood". Why pedestrian? Because the director's desperate keenness to establish the character becomes obvious after the first half of the first shot, and the rest is padding. The remedy? The interpolation of some incident — someone looking startled, close-up of e.g., a stolen plate of food, followed by an establishing mid-shot of the now obvious thief with it. More narrative detail is the certain cure for dull script or loose direction.

Example 2: "mixes from plates to wheels to gramophone discs". At one time such mixes were considered very smart as a short-cut action-link. Then they became so familiar that immediately they appeared on the screen the link was anticipated, and so it was possible to shorten, and eventually dispense with them. Now if an amateur gets enamoured of them and does them lovingly and lingeringly, they outstay their welcome. To get by nowadays they have to be done really slickly, which means about half-second timing, not the two seconds often advised in books. You allow two seconds for a readily recognisable close-up only if the subject is new to an audience.

Example 3: "the everlasting long shot/mid shot/close-up cutting pattern". TV sins here, though I must say that the cutting in live shows is usually pretty impressive. Where TV and some amateur filmmakers go wrong is in using too consistent close-up set-ups, giving the impression that the cameraman possesses only a 1-metre close-up lens; this limits all his close-ups, whatever their dramatic emphasis, to an exact full head.

The director should go back to the early text books and insist on a reasonable choice in both camera angle and

camera distance. With greater variety the camerawork can be made to suit the action instead of merely portraying it objectively, as in TV, and close-ups and mid-shots are not so categorized that they appear to the viewer as distinctive classes and thus obtrude.

None of these three examples will be found in a Hitchcock film. Any work by the old master can be relied on to emerge with flying colours from searching analysis of the direction.

### Open Air Shows

TALKING of the pedestrian, he is often able to get quite a good view of the show at drive-in cinemas, especially if he dallies. The photograph shows the screen of a drive-in on one of the main roads out of Melbourne. Australians drive on the left, and when I passed it one night there were several cars parked opposite the one shown, their occupants getting a free glimpse of Kenneth More in *The 39 Steps*.



The imposing screen of a drive-in cinema on Burwood Road, Melbourne

I chose a camera position to include the two factory chimneys, partly to show that the drive-in is near industrial as well as residential areas, and partly because the wonderfully straight smoke plumes are a reminder of how clear the atmosphere is. What a contrast to the drooping smoke emissions one associates with Manchester! At Melbourne the weather forecasting is very reliable on short term, and it is rare indeed for a show to be disrupted by rain. (If it is, a free admission later is given). But there was no performance when I took the picture. There was a slight drizzle that evening.

Prices are around 6s. per passenger, whatever the size of the car. The sound is good, from a small unit with volume-control. Obviously it is advisable to have a clean windscreen. Projection standards were very good. The show consists of

one or two shorts supporting a "big" feature film which has finished its general release to conventional theatres.

### House on the Move

HAVING drawn attention some months ago to the filmic possibilities of road widening, I felt I could not let the scene illustrated go unrecorded. I came across the house-on-the-move near St. Louis and was impressed by its size. A three-storey affair, it has ground floor accommodation equal to that of at least four conventional semi-detacheds. There it was, on joists and rollers, approaching



Gentleman's portable residence avoiding a new highway

its new site after having found itself slap in the way of a new highway and refusing to be demolished.

If, however, you are not making a film about road widening, I should be the first to admit that a series of shots like this would be a decided embarrassment at the editing stage. It would prove a disruptive element if you crammed it in regardless of continuity, because it is intriguing enough to cause your audience to ask questions. Whereupon you would find yourself in the annoying position of explaining about shifting houses while, half headed on the screen, other shots unroll of a quite different kind.

### Talkie Tragedies

KEVIN BROWNLOW's recent notes on the release of *Noah's Ark* as a part talkie bring to mind three tragedies which arose from the mad change to 100 per cent. talking in 1929/30. First was the studios' mistake in holding back some films while talking scenes were added. The result was almost always disastrous because no one really knew how to handle dialogue, and technical limitations placed a quality barrier between the silent and sound scenes.

Second catastrophe was the personal difficulties of many very talented players: a fierce, high-pitched Yankee accent ruled out one or two stars, and oddly enough, there was a similar contretemps in England where stars appearing at that time included Annie Ondra, Lya de Putti, and Lars Hanson, not one

continued on page 183

# O-D-D- S-H-O-T-S-

BY GEORGE H. SEWELL · F.R.P.S. · F.B.K.S.

**Sound Judgment** Potters Bar C.S. have been engaging in a familiar discussion: "were the judges right?" over their recent Six Best competition. Not having seen the films, I can't say, but I would like to comment on the suggestion that since "the trophy for the best sound film is intended for the film with the best sound", it is sound quality, the style of the commentary, clarity of speech and sync., which should be the deciding factors. On the face of it, this appears quite a reasonable contention, and if, in fact, the trophy were awarded for "the best sound track", it would be fully justified; the award could indeed be won by a tape run without any pictures at all.

But it is for the best sound film. It is not alone the content and quality of the sound track, but its relationship to the visuals that matters. Visuals and sound might be less than perfect, yet united produce a better film than others in which one of the two parts is more finished. This is a matter which can hardly be measured by technical yardsticks. On some counts, for instance, *Short Spell* and *Runaway Train* would be regarded as crude and unpolished, yet I am sure they have brought more pleasure than many smoother, longer productions. This is not to excuse slipshod workmanship but to plead for a more sympathetic appraisal of films as a whole.

**Production Risks** If you organise a garden fête you can insure against bad weather. If you undertake a big day's shooting calling for many people, props, and facilities, have you thought of the possibility of insuring against not only the weather but other mishaps which might stop the proceedings? Professional companies do. My own is at the moment recovering money due through being prevented from shooting as planned.

Make enquiries of your local insurance agent. Those who handle car insurance might be able to help. But don't write to me for more information—I have none. Each case would have to be negotiated separately.

**Leading the Way** One's never too old to learn—or to drop a clanger. Recently I had an animated graph prepared for a film I am making. The animated part was fine, but when the blank graph first came on the screen, nobody knew where to look first: for competing for attention were name of the company, its factory and product, the legend "Tons" at the foot and a column

of figures above. That's bad practice. The audience should have been given each piece of information separately and only as much as was needed for them to understand the graph.

So now, in the new version, we have left out the name of the firm and its factory (that information is adequately covered elsewhere in the film), and begin with "Production of X..." and the vertical and horizontal axes of the graph. Then "Tons" pops in at the foot, followed at half second intervals by "10,000", "20,000", etc. Nine times out of ten the best course in this class of work is to start with a bare or nearly bare screen, and flip in the information in rapid sequence, so that the audience is adequately prepared for the main part of the animation.

**Colour and Modelling** Artists seldom try to get modelling merely by using darker tones, for this invariably gives a dirty result. Instead, they use variations in colour, keeping one side of the subject warmer than the other. Sitting in on a judging session the other day, I saw an outstanding example of this technique, the opposition of a slightly greenish light on one side of some miners' faces against the warmer light cast on the other giving a powerful sense of depth and realism. The producer had also used selective colour lighting equally successfully for shots of equipment. But if you are fired to have a go yourself, remember that the differences in colour must be very slight. Strong colours will look crude.

But colour doesn't always win hands down. In a black and white film I have been working on is a shot of a 200ft. long factory interior which looks terrific on the screen, giving a tremendous impression of size and space. Yet a similar scene shot in colour by a cameraman no less capable than mine, with considerably greater lighting resources, even allowing for the heavier demands of colour, does not give this impression to anything like the same degree.

The explanation lies in the restricted range of colour film, which does not permit the use of chiaroscuro lighting. It's one of the penalties you have to pay for using colour film—and one of the reasons why a brilliant photographer I know affirmed: "I've been through colour, and come back to real photography—black and white. In black and white you are much more the master of the final result".

Incidentally, I used foreground interest in the factory scene to emphasize size: two men in silhouette, with, in the far distance, minute figures moving about. In another scene, barrows were wheeled

among vast machines which might have looked no bigger than a sewing machine on the screen had there been no reference point from which their size could be gauged.

**A Bit of a Drip** I have long held that the illusion of movement in cinematography is more due to mental reactions than to physiological ones, such as persistence of vision on the retina. The other day I was redrafting a commentary to fit a newly cut film, one of the scenes in which showed a chemical test. In this, fluid fell in a series of glittering drops down the inside of a tall measure. It didn't matter whether I ran the film backwards or forwards, those drops still seemed to me to fall downwards. My memory of the behaviour of free fluid apparently would not allow my mind to interpret the information on the screen in any other way.

You get the same illusion from pouring water from one utensil into another provided you cannot see whether their contents are increasing or diminishing. The illusion of wheels moving in reverse (mentioned by Sound Track two weeks ago) is of a different character. In this case the elements concerned—the spokes—are regular and nearly identical in appearance. In the subjects mentioned above they are of a random nature, as it were, and so the mind can interpret them more freely.

**A Day for Editing** How long do you take to put your films together? A professional, armed with complete continuity notes, takes about one full working day to make a first rough-cut of a single reel—ten minutes' screen time. After that, of course, a great deal more work will be done on it by the editor and director together.

**Spectator or Participant?** Fed up with my constant assertion of the superiority of film over television technique, someone asked me to justify my attitude. I tried to explain the difference by pointing out that pure television technique puts the viewer into the position of any observer, whereas the cine camera, while it can, and often does, do the same thing, can also make the audience participate in the scene.

Take the case of a conversation. The T.V. camera looks at the speakers, and though they may look at the camera a good deal of the time, the viewer is always an outside spectator. But in a film the camera can move around until it is looking over the shoulder of one man at the face of the other, or it can take the place of one of the speakers, so that the responses of the other are aimed directly at it, thus making the audience, for a few seconds at least, identify themselves with the first man.



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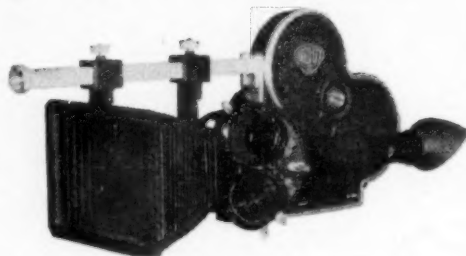
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# FILM SHOWS IN CHURCH

This is the concluding article in the series

AFTER the show comes the dreadful business of dismantling, with the audience still in the hall as likely as not. If you can wait for it to go, it is better to do so, but audiences on church premises are usually people who "belong" there, and know one another, and therefore will linger for the most part, talking. Some may offer to help you, and the offer will be kindly and well meant, but it can be a real worry, and you may have to be very tactful.

The worst thing in my recent experience was when I gave a show to a religious community. When it ended the Superior announced that Compline would be sung then and there, instead of in Chapel. No packing up, of course, could be even attempted while this Office was performed, and when it eventually ended the Rule of "Greater Silence" became operative, and all lips were sealed.

This, however, did not hinder the Brethren from offering (in dumb show) to help with the dismantling of the gear, which they busily did. Several of them in their habits fell upon projector, screen, speaker, transformer, spare parts, and yards of cable, and proceeded to stow it all away in what they sincerely believed was the right fashion. Prohibited by the Rule of the Order from saying even so much as "No, not there" and "I'll do that one", I leapt around in frantic pantomime trying to control my well-meaning friends. It took a day and a half later on at home to get everything back into my own pet system.

Religious communities, in any event, are a special case, and probably outside the scope of this article. They love films, which they rarely see except on 16mm., but so far as the technicalities are concerned they are blandly innocent. "They are so full of heavenly thoughts that they are no earthly use." One community I know (of nuns this time) was given a sound projector which it ran happily till something broke. Then it was put away for ever, like a child's broken toy. They have only just got around to getting it mended. One is reminded of the Scotsman who played his new gramophone till he lost the needle. . . .

Much of what has been said applies just as forcibly when films are being shown in a church, rather than in a hall or school. But in church everything needs to be just that much better still. For the film will almost certainly be set in a context of worship. It will, so to speak, take the place of the sermon, which elevates both it and the projector to a place of unusual

dignity. The golden rule, therefore, should be to conceal the naked mechanics of the show as much as possible.

*Ars est celare artem.* Everything must be in tip-top readiness long before the congregation assembles. The film must have been checked for condition from end to end, and the machinery overhauled thoroughly. A brand-new projector lamp is desirable, and it is as well to have amplifier valves tested, and the photocell and exciter lamp carefully checked. Everything that can be done to eliminate a breakdown must be done.

As for the siting of the projector, if (as will probably be the case) it has to stand in a centre aisle, let it be covered before it is wanted by a black cloth. This may sound a little extreme, but it will, in fact, assist the devotional atmosphere by depriving people's eyes of a false focus. For a projector dominates a scene wherever it is; everyone takes a look at it, and to many people it is a compelling point of interest. Covered up, it becomes less distracting.

Inevitably, too, the screen takes the eye, and (what is worse) takes it off the altar. If it is found that the screen hides the latter completely, try to talk the clergy into setting up a temporary altar in front of it, with the usual ornaments. The screen and the film it will shortly carry thus become a twentieth-century reredos or altar-piece. It will, indeed, be found that a moving scene behind the altar seems just

as right as a carving or a painting. If there are candles burning, they can often be left without actually detracting from the picture, but it is a simple matter for a server or verger to extinguish them as the film begins.

The incumbent or minister, of course, has the deciding voice in what is done in the church, but as it is usually he who arranges for the film he will generally be found anxious that everything shall be right. Try to impress upon him the psychological importance of concealing the mechanics. At my own church the cables to the projector and loud-speaker are led under the floor, in the channel that carries the central heating pipe beneath a cast iron grating the length of the nave. The screen is slung from one of the transverse roof tiles and is ten feet above the floor, giving clear passage under it for the choir.

The film occupies exactly the place (and duration) of the sermon, and during the hymn that precedes it the choir files out of its stalls down to reserved seats in the nave. When the hymn ends, the lights are lowered in correct order, and at the press of a switch the film starts, already correctly framed and focused. The lights come up again as the film's end title appears, another hymn is begun, and the choir walks back to the chancel again.

The projector is immediately covered up, and—this is important—not so much as touched again until the whole congre-

## Filming in Church

A Cine Club Woos the Teenager

I AM SURE that many churches would find a cine club an effective answer to the problem: how to engage the interest of the teenager? St. George's C.C., Tredegar, might perhaps provide one example of how to go about it. When it was born, the secretary was a thirteen-year-old; the forty-five-year-old chairman was tolerated as a necessary evil. But now, because the films we have made have attracted new members and widened the scope of the club, we have a committee of adults, a fully co-operating church, and a church hall for HQ and for shows.

Our first objective was the production of a record of the church's principal activities throughout the year. We shot a baptismal service on Gevaert Ultra with nine borrowed photofloods and a borrowed tripod. 24 photofloods were used for an 8mm. Kodachrome record of a Mass (Bolex C8 in the sanctuary for close shots, f/1.9 Kodak in the aisle and chancel for medium shots). It should perhaps be mentioned that the film was intended for instruction and that the production team were all Anglican communicants.

Some time later we shot the Stations of the Cross in colour, and outside activities included a diocesan Mother's Union parade and a scout camp. We also tried our hand at a fictional film, *The Dukestown Flyer*, involving the youngsters in a rip-roaring story of athletics and kidnapping. Their interest flagged during the editing sessions, but the excitement of seeing themselves on the screen rapidly restored their enthusiasm, and now we have a full programme. One can perhaps hope that participation in church-sponsored film activities will also have helped strengthen their awareness of the church.—EMLYN WATKINS.



gation has departed. The impression made by the film and the service in which it is set must not be overlaid by the sight of some self-important person fussily fiddling with the machine the minute the Blessing has been given. In fact, in my church it remains where it is until next morning.

Sound in churches is often a tricky business. Such places differ widely in their acoustic properties, and while a preacher can usually match his voice and enunciation to the needs of the building, the machine cannot. If there is a powerful echo the only solution may be to have a few small speakers at low power spaced out down the sides. This is the system generally adopted in those churches which have microphone installations. If there is no alternative to using only one speaker, it should be put as high up as possible. "Presence" may have to be left to chance and the speaker put above the pulpit, since this is usually the best speaking point in the building. The advice given earlier about visiting the place before the show cannot be too strongly urged when that show is to be in a church. Hours can be spent experimenting with the best place for the loud-speaker, but it is all in the finest of good causes.

There are many more things that could

be said about giving film performances, but they are not as important to the show as these. For example, it is often worthwhile, if the programme is serious or partly so, to have some programmes duplicated giving a few details about the films, such as a synopsis of the story or script, and quoting some of the credit titles. Whether these programmes are sold or given away is a matter of personal choice. Their value is that they prepare the audience and awaken interest, and occupy its time while it waits for the show to start.

In this respect substandard film performances can steal a march on the 35mm. theatre, for there the modern habit of continuous performance means that most of the audience arrives in darkness in a show that began some time before. A substandard show, with a definite starting time, one performance only, and programmes in the audience's hand, partakes of the nature of the "live" theatre, and, in my opinion, gains thereby in dignity.

A second comparatively unimportant point is preparation of the proscenium. There is nothing particularly helpful about curtains that open and shut, except, perhaps, in a more or less permanent installation, where they can protect the screen from dust. If a show is given in a hall which has a well-appointed stage, of

course, then by all means take advantage of it, but to bring along pelmets and tabs and potted plants to enshrine a screen that stands on one shining leg like a stork is (I think) trying to gild the lily. All the frills in the world will not compensate for bad showmanship at the projector; and if the essential mechanics are well handled, the show will be good, however naked the screen.

It has been assumed all through the foregoing that you are showing films at the invitation of some recognised body for the benefit of its own particular members. If you discover that there is an intention to charge admission and let in the general public, be very sure of what is happening before you consent to help. The law comes into the matter as soon as money is taken, whether at the door or by pre-sale of tickets, and the Kinematograph Renters' Society usually has a watch-dog in the shape of the local cinema manager.

He is not going to be pleased if you are showing full-length features to a public audience that pays to come in. No matter what the age of the feature may be, he will object. Make sure that those who invite you and your projector to their premises are doing so with absolutely no profit motive, but purely for the entertainment of their own especial members.

## JUMP CUTTINGS

The Lower Nettlefield C. S. Newsletter By Hon. Sec.

OUR hard-pressed Programme Secretary, Mr. Albert "Bulldog" Wicklow, has asked me to ask members if they have any suggestions for club meetings. As he pointed out, he has been coping with this job for four years now, and the strain of finding new attractions is beginning to tell.

In passing, it hardly seems four years since "Bulldog" and his charming wife Audrey came along to Nettlefield C.S. for the first time. On that occasion, you may recall, he showed us his own films about physical fitness and chatted at length of the happy times he had while serving in the Commandos.

### Special Announcement

The Committee ask me to announce that from now on the Society's tubular steel proscenium arch is *not* available for hire by other organisations. As custodian of the arch I would like to make it clear that when I was approached on this score by members of Nettlefield Sea Cadets I naturally assumed that they wanted the arch for a local film show.

No one was more surprised than I on receiving the first of those panic-stricken phone calls from the lock-keeper at Nettlefield Weir. The events of the rest of that day are only too well-known, but I would take this opportunity of thanking members and friends (both swimmers and non-swimmers) for their active help. Mr. Montgomery, of Nettlefield Sea Cadets, assures me that he will in future keep a strict watch on their bridge-building operations. Be that as it may, on its two miles drift downstream, our arch appears to have collected quite a bit of flotsam and jetsam, and if anyone

could help me get it off I would be greatly obliged.

### Tea For Who?

Can anyone manage the tea-break on club nights? Now that Mrs. (Audrey) Wicklow has left the district for good, we do need a replacement volunteer for this work.

### The Late Lamented

Members are again asked to be more punctual and arrive at or by 8 p.m. on Club nights. The few habitual late-comers I have mentioned before will persist in their unsporting behaviour. Instead of entering the clubroom they seem to prefer standing about in the hallway and chatting loudly about the programme being shown inside. As most of our programmes recently have been devoted to silent films, one can't help wondering if their remarks may, one day, cause offence in certain quarters.

### Change of Address

Mr. Albert "Bulldog" Wicklow has had to move from "Dunroamin" and all correspondence should now be sent to Dormitory 4, Y.M.C.A., Chislington.

### An Overall Overhaul

The club projector has recently suffered another breakdown and will not therefore be available for hire during the next few weeks. This is the seventh time it has run into trouble lately, and no less than the seventh time it has been returned to our Mr. Teddy Blower (The Photographic Pharmacy) for repair.

I myself took it into his shop on Tuesday

last. Although not able to contact Mr. Blower personally, I did overhear a remark he made to his assistant as I came out. Just where, on the club projector, "the bracket" is located I do not know, but I did hear him say that the very next time there was any trouble he would give it a "punch up" This seems to me to be remarkably civil of him, under the circumstances.

### Resignation

We have just heard that Mr. Albert "Bulldog" Wicklow has resigned from his post as programme secretary.

### Subscriptions

Our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Shamus O'Shea, asks me to point out that subscriptions are now due. For the benefit of new members and, let's face it, some of the old ones, may I state that the yearly subscription to our Society is two guineas. This paltry sum enables one to: (a) Support our weekly meetings at the Clubroom. (Also partake of free tea and cake on these occasions.) (b) Borrow discs, books and films from the Society's library. (c) Enter our annual Film Contest (if this is ever re-instated in the Society's calendar). (d) Hire, at nominal charge, the Society's projector and first aid box.

Mr. O'Shea also asks me to say that I.O.U.s, foreign coins, and National Health Insurance Stamps will not be accepted by him this year.

### Vacancy

Any member interested in the job of programme secretary is asked to go along and see the outgoing holder of this post, Mr. Albert "Bulldog" Wicklow. His present address is Rest Haven Lodge, Elm Tree Avenue, Nettlefield. Matron tells me that the visiting hours on weekday evenings are 7 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. sharp.



Manchester C. S. have gone afar afield for their story film (16 mm., colour) — 10 Nevin, N. Wales; but the film hasn't strayed as well. The care taken with set-ups, exemplified in this still, no doubt explains why.

## A Film on Rambling that Went Too Far Astray

The idea was good, but when the camera jammed for the fourth time there was nothing for it but to admit defeat.

BY DICK HAMILTON

IT was the first film of the Harold House Youth Club in Liverpool. I planned it as a simple, low-budget affair with a small cast, to be shot on location in Liverpool, North Wales, Yugoslavia, and the Sahara Desert. The title, not surprisingly, was *Didn't They Ramble!* It starts off with a few ramblers assembling at Liverpool's Pier Head, catching the ferry to Birkenhead, where they get the bus to Wales, and then beginning an eventful ramble.

Their troubles start when one of the group, who has overslept, misses the boat. This was the first sequence we were to film, and everything was set to begin one Sunday morning. The weather was fine, the cast ready and eager; and if I hadn't been rushed to hospital for an emergency operation, we should have got off to a flying start. It was three weeks before I was able to resume.

The next battle I had with the film was under the kitchen table: splicing it. To cut down on the cost of 16mm. film, I decided to shoot on ex-Govt. negative stock, which comes rolled up tightly in reels of 25 feet. Four such lengths have to be joined together for each 100ft. spool; after long months curled up in small rolls, the film is extremely reluctant to stay straight. Given the further difficulty of no darkroom, life becomes very complicated.

After midnight on Saturdays I used to draw the kitchen curtains, drape rugs over the table reaching to the floor, and crawl into this improvised changing-bag. It was stifling hot, and to effect splices in the dark I had only my sense of touch to rely on.

Then the shooting began. Down at the Ferry, we got exactly what I wanted without any retakes. One shot, from the ferry itself, shows the latecomer running the length of the landing stage. Just as he reaches the end, the camera tilts down to show the gap between the boat and the shore, six feet wide, and getting wider.

We filmed a sequence at dusk where one of the group, who thinks he knows more than everybody else, decides to take a short cut on a compass bearing. Eyes firmly fixed on his compass, he marches forward north-north-east, and falls slap into a pond. This action he was very reluctant to perform; but we enjoyed it,

and so did the representatives of the Press whom I had invited along. The *Liverpool Daily Post* printed a photograph of the lad emerging from the slimy pond with an old motor tyre round his neck.

The next difficulty was finding a single-line railway going into a tunnel. I consulted Ordnance Survey maps for miles around, and found only two within a radius of 50 miles: one in the Peak District, and the other at a place in Wales where, by a fortunate coincidence, the Youth Club spent a week-end at a hostel. The trains were few, and as we scrambled down the embankment to get the shot we needed, I got the impression of distinct hostility on the part of our leading actor, who was wearing shorts. (How was I to have known the nettles grew waist-high?)

The camera was just ready beside the track in time to get a shot of the train coming out of the tunnel past us. As edited, the film shows the Rambler, who has got lost, making his way down onto the line, and wandering into the tunnel. He disappears into the darkness; there is a moment's pause, and then a train thunders out of the tunnel along the single line. There is a longer pause, and he comes staggering out again, his face blackened, and his haversack awry. This gag was not unknown to Mack Sennett, but it always goes down well.

A country bus proved far less obliging than that train. A different sequence shows the ramblers basking in the sun on a hill-top. The leader glances at his watch; plenty of time yet. But another glance shows him that his watch has stopped, and the bus is due any minute. They all rush downhill to the main road; the bus goes past just as they reach the hedge; and they are faced with a long walk home.

I kept a careful eye on the road before giving the ramblers the signal to begin their run, and they scrambled through the hedge when the bus was 25 yards past them. Beautiful timing!—but the driver saw them in his driving mirror, and stopped for them. However, the shot would have been ruined anyway, for the film had jammed in the camera. By the time the next bus was due, it was too late for shooting.

The Sahara Desert comes in a sort of

dream sequence after the greediest of the ramblers had knocked his bottle of squash over during a picnic lunch, and has to plod thirstily up a steep hill in the baking sun. He stops for a moment, takes off his cap (in close-up), mops his brow, and replaces on his head—a sun helmet.

A long shot shows him dressed in tropical kit, standing in a sandy waste. He climbs a dune, passing a skeleton with an empty water-bottle. This was to be filmed on the Southport sands, with a medical student's skeleton. But Yugoslavia would have been real.

At the end of the film the group, utterly lost, climbs down a hillside in the dawn. Below it lies a town, and the leader peers through his binoculars. The next shot, to have been taken on my holiday abroad, would show an obviously foreign town, with street signs in an unknown language full of Js, Ks, and Zs. The other ramblers turn on their leader in a fury, swat him on the head with an Ordnance Survey map of North Wales, and drive him back up the hill.

That is where the film ends, in the script. But we never got that far. We were just about to film the scene at the narrow bridge over the 80-foot Welsh ravine where one of the girls drops her camera (a papier-mache model), when the film jammed again. For the fourth time, one of the splices made in the dark had broken. After a night's battle under the kitchen table, it was the last straw, and I decided to break the news to the cast.

With these splices breaking, I told them, many of the scenes already shot had failed to come out. The falling into the pond had been wasted; so had the day when I got the whole cast up at half-past five on a Sunday morning to film in the dawn. There was too much still to film, and to re-shoot; it was now autumn, and continuity could not be maintained with the leaves falling from the trees. I drew in a breath and waited.

There was a long pause during which the cast looked as though they would have liked to lynch me. Finally the leader spoke, the one who had braved the nettles with his bare knees. "Never mind," he said. "It can't be helped. When do we start the next film?"



Our Enquiry Bureau has always been one of the busiest departments of A.C.W., and with weekly publication we expect it to be still busier. Will querists therefore please note the following few points designed to enable us to offer the speediest possible service: please (1) enclose stamped addressed envelope; (2) write on one side of paper; attach the Query Coupon on page 185. Address is on page 155.

## Your Problems Solved

### Overhauling Wundatone

*The mechanism of my 16mm. S.P. Wundatone s.o.f. projector is in good order, and the amplifier has been serviced (new exciter lamp and photo cell), so only two items remain to be dealt with to make the machine serviceable: (1) Replacement of rubber main driving belt (I understand they are unobtainable); (2) sound optics—which, I feel, are misaligned. I shall be grateful for any help.—H.K.K., Burgess Hill.*

We suggest you take the old belt to one of the large cine dealers such as Wallace Heaton Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, London, W.1, who have a wide selection from which you will almost certainly find something suitable. Alternatively, a rubber manufacturer such as W. Mannering & Co. Ltd., 180-182 Bernondsey Street, London, S.E.1, should be able to help you if given full details of the size of the original. A moulded belt is preferable to a spliced one.

Regarding the sound optics, the professional way of aligning and focusing employs a high frequency test film and adjustment for maximum sound output, checked usually with a meter across the output of the amplifier. It is, however, possible to do quite an acceptable job by running a length of well recorded music track, adjusting to bring the projected slit of light precisely at 90 deg. to the edge of the film (azimuth), then focusing carefully to and fro until one obtains the point of best reproduction of the higher frequencies. If either azimuth or focus is not correctly adjusted, the music will sound muffled. Lock the adjustments when the best positions have been found.

### Suppressing Radio and TV Interference

*My projector, made several years ago, creates intolerable interference on TV and radio sets in all the houses around us. Is there anything I can do to stop this interference? The machine is an ac/dc model with a brush type motor.—K.J.C., Abergyle.*

One cannot say for certain how much suppression will be required for a particular machine, but interference will certainly be reduced to insignificant proportions if this simple procedure is followed.

To suppress TV interference, fit tiny TV inductors (chokes) inside the motor, one in each lead on to the brushes and within just  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. of them. They can be insulated with two rubber or, better, neoprene (Hellerman type) sleeves, one slipped over the wire from each end of the inductor. For better TV suppression, a triple 470 pF. capacitor can be added in "delta connection". Makers: Bellings-Lee: L.1334 TV inductors (2 amp. max.), or Dubilier: TV interference Suppressor Kit (2 amp. max. size costs about 6s.), which also contains the tiny triple capacitor.

Radio interference is most easily suppressed by fitting a plug-top suppressor (a plug containing suppressor capacitors) instead of the ordinary mains plug. Makers: Bellings-Lee:

5 amp. 3 pin plug top suppressor, or Dubilier: suppressor plugs, 5a 3 pin, 15a 3 pin, or 13a 3 pin (about 12s. 6d. each). The third pin of 3 pin plugs must, of course, always be properly earthed.

We suggest you contact a good radio and electrical dealer for the components. Fitting the TV inductors, etc., is somewhat tricky, and you may prefer to use a Bellings-Lee L.1314 TV flex lead suppressor (containing the two L.1334 inductors) which is in the cable, so is much more easily fitted; but it is much less effective, particularly on Band 3. Note that, as the inductors are 2 amp. max., you may have to arrange to wire the inductor device so that the lamp current does not pass through it.

### Motor Driven Curtains

*I am making a proscenium with motor driven curtains. Which is the best sort of motor to use, and where can it be bought?—D.V.W., Beeston.*

An a.c. induction motor is the most suitable because it works quietly, due to the relatively low r.p.m. of its armature (about 1400 r.p.m.). These motors can be had with built-in gear box, and various output shaft speeds are available. They usually work with an external capacitor, and reversing is by changing over leads (wiring diagram with motor).

Try M.R. Supplies Ltd., 68, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1. They issue a list, *Fractional Horse Power Geared Motors*, sent on request (enclose stamped addressed envelope). The S.D. 9 size should be suitable for driving curtains. To make sure it has adequate power, measure the torque required to turn the pulley driving the curtains by wrapping string round the pulley, and pulling the end of it with a spring balance. (Weights could be used, by trial and error.) For example, using a 4in. dia. pulley at 1:1 from motor—that is, 2in. radius—and, say, 4lbs. pull needed to turn the pulley, torque is  $2 \times 4 = 8$ in.-lbs. A motor rated at 22in.-lbs. torque would therefore have an ample reserve of power.

### Sound Stripe Experiments

*I am experimenting with a magnetic head, connected to my tape recorder, for recording and reproducing striped film on my 8mm. projector. Which is the best place to mount the head?—L.G.G., Newcastle-on-Tyne.*

You will probably have to compromise between the most desirable position and that which produces least pick-up of hum, etc., from the motor. A few minutes with the recording head on a loose cable, so that it can be moved about the machine and various positions tried, will give a very good idea of where it cannot be fitted! If possible, try to position the magnetic head 56 frames below the picture gate aperture. You will no doubt have to screen it in mu-metal in the usual way, and see that the projector motor is fitted with the most efficient suppression possible to avoid picking up crackle.

The magnetic record/playback head must, of course, be fitted in a part of the film path



where the film motion is perfectly smooth—that is, in no way intermittent. A typical place is in the lower loop immediately before the bottom sprocket; the intermittency of the film from the gate is removed by a flywheel sound drum plus pressure roller. It is sometimes easier to fit the head before the top sprocket—rather an unconventional position—and here again it is rarely wise to rely on the smoothness of the pull by the sprocket to drag the film over the recording head perfectly smoothly.

One must determine by experiment if the simplest methods will give sufficiently good results, bearing in mind that 8mm. sound is severely limited by the low film speed and narrow width of the stripe, and it therefore becomes important to get the best results from it that it is capable of yielding. The erase head will, of course, be fitted at a point in the film path earlier than the record/play-back head.

### Creases in Screen

*Why do creases show up so badly on my silver surfaced screen, when a friend's white screen has much worse creases which hardly show at all?—D.G.M., Ealing.*

The silver surface is more highly reflective than that of a white screen, and of the total light falling on it a higher proportion is reflected in one direction—towards the viewers, if they are sitting in the right place! So they see a brighter picture than they would with a white matt screen which reflects light to all angles more or less equally. If, however, the silver screen is creased, the creases angle the reflected light away from the audience, so they see that part of the screen as less bright. Incidentally, the viewers could find a new viewing position where a crease appears brighter than the rest of the picture. In general, the more highly reflective the surface of a silver screen, the more serious will be the effect of any blemishes.

### Condensation on Lens

*At first my Portay 8mm. animated viewer appeared to have no defect, but now, after 3-4 minutes' use the picture clouds over and the image vanishes. This condition continues for about 15 mins., after which the picture re-appears and slowly clears. It is as though the glass suddenly becomes obscured by condensation, but I keep the viewer in a dry place where no dampness can get at it.—A. J. D., Richmond, Yorks.*

The effect described is due to condensation on the lenses, etc. This is not necessarily caused by dampness and depends simply on whether the temperature of the apparatus is below the dew point of the air surrounding it. To prevent it, all you have to do is to take the viewer into a warmer atmosphere for at least half an hour before using it. Possibly the place in which you are storing it is cold, but dry.



## Postscript to the Sad Case of *Lady Loverley's Chatter*

TO wind up the sad case of *Lady Loverley's Chatter*, about which I wrote a little while ago, I am delighted to be able to clear William K. Everson absolutely. He has written me this explanation:

"I noted your distress and disappointment at my lending 'assistance' to this book, and don't for a moment blame you. If I had worked on such a project, I'd be wide open to your criticism. The annoying thing is that I had literally nothing to do with the book, or with another one the same compiler is bringing out. Doubly annoying is that here in America there was quite a vogue for these publications for a while—there must have been a dozen or more of them, but luckily the novelty seems to be wearing off.

"I was several times approached to compose such books myself, or to supply stills for them (at handsome fees). I turned down all the offers because I was so very much out of sympathy with the whole idea. Thus when this opus came out, it was especially annoying to find myself associated with it, the

more so since I didn't even make the fast buck that so many people assumed I did!

"All that happened was that the author (!) came to me with a huge sheaf of silent film stills. He was bringing out a picture book on silent films, and couldn't afford the huge legal fees he'd been quoted for determining which stills could be used safely without getting permission from the producing companies. I spent an hour with him, going through them all and telling him which films had fallen into the public domain and thus could be used freely, and which ones he'd need permission for. That was my sole connection with the whole wretched project, and I assume he shoved in that credit line to me either to butter me up for future use, or to forestall a bill from me for legal advice—which wouldn't have been forthcoming, anyway.

"Please be assured that I definitely haven't gone over to the enemy camp! Quite the contrary. In fact, I brought out a book of my own last year—*Classics*

of the Silent Screen, devoted to 50 great silent American films and 75 personalities. It's a ghost-written job, done for a TV disc jockey who doesn't know Griffith from Roger Corman. My credit was 'research assistant', and over here most of the critics were kind enough to read through and between the lines and slant their reviews accordingly.

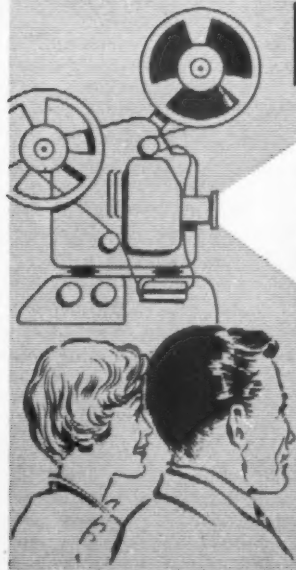
"My main reason for ghosting it was that an earlier version had been written—full of the most ghastly errors and distortions—and would have been printed could nothing better have been assembled... in a hurry. I put the book together in about three months (with very liberal borrowings from my Huff Society notes!) so at least had the satisfaction of getting out the kind of book I wanted—and of stopping the other one dead in its tracks!"

I have seen this book, but distribution over here has been held up for some reason or other. As soon as it is generally obtainable, I hope to review it. But if you find an odd copy for sale anywhere—buy it! Apart from making fascinating reading, it is probably the most important contribution to silent film appreciation since the introduction of those Huff Society programme notes. And I can't think of a higher compliment than that.

KEVIN BROWNLOW.

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## PROFESSIONALS AND THE TEN BEST

### He Who Pays The Piper . . .

From Lord Stormont.

MR. BREWER'S letter, far from being off the beam, raises a number of points which are vital to the future of amateur cinematography in this country. These points cannot continue to be ignored by organisers of national competitions without the risk that many lone workers and small clubs will become so discouraged that they will hesitate to enter, to the loss of the entire cine movement.

Mr. Brewer's letter, in fact, raises two issues: the personal position of those making films and the origin of the funds spent in making them. According to the I.A.C., there is nothing to prevent persons employed in the film industry from entering amateur competitions provided that they do not employ their professional resources to do so. (*This is the UNICA ruling.*—Editor.) Thus if a professional director, cameraman and editor decide to make a film in their spare time, there is nothing to stop them entering it for the IAC competition, provided the camera man directs, the editor holds the camera and the director does the cutting. This is, of course, an absurd position,

and I wonder what your reaction is, particularly in less obvious cases concerning people on the fringe of the industry.

With regard to sponsored films, the organisers of film competitions appear to have not the slightest interest as to who pays for the films entered. The IAC position seems to be that so long as the producers are not personally paid for their trouble, the film counts as amateur. But is it fair for the Bristol Cine Society to be paid money out of public funds to make *Marlborough House* and then to use that excellent film to win awards in several national competitions for amateur films?

No doubt many readers will say that if these films, made by professionals and/or sponsored, are excluded from competitions, quality will suffer, that in fact the end justifies the means; and we shall also be told that quite a number of Ten Best films are made by individuals or small clubs. I do not think that either of these arguments is valid. I learn that a member of the Grasshopper Group is currently making a film of a ballet, using a large stage and all the props. The synchronised sound accompaniment will be provided by a full orchestra. Needless to say, the money for the film is coming from public funds. When it is eventually seen in public, probably as a winner of amateur competitions, can the ordinary film maker be anything but discouraged?

I submit that you have a duty to the small fellow no less than to the big battalions. Sooner or later the former will have to be protected against the latter, otherwise many aspiring film makers will restrict themselves to baby on the lawn pictures, small clubs will continue to turn out rubbish while awards in the major competitions will be won exclusively by those clubs who have the ability and the cash to turn out "amateur" epics, or by semi-professionals using the skill and experience acquired in the course of their profession.

London, E.C.A.

STORMONT.

### No Restrictions for Hams

WAS I, I wonder, entirely by chance that your correspondent's letter headed "Professionals and the Ten Best" was placed next to one referring to another grand hobby? "Unexposed Negative: Q.E.D." refers, of course, to amateur radio transmission (a hobby I pursued for some 25 years). Amateur radio "hams" would never dream of debarring a man from their competitions because he was a professional wireless operator or radio engineer, even if his competition work was sandwiched in between his profes-

## NEXT WEEK

What do you look for in a camera and projector, and why is it that manufacturers don't produce equipment with all the refinements you would like? A designer of cine apparatus answers this question and many more in a fascinating new series in which he takes you behind the scenes and describes what is involved in the production of a new projector and camera. Specifications, design problems, how the factory solves them, and the role played by the chief designer are among the intriguing items discussed.

\* \* \*

"By the time I had gone through the entire Sportster range, two Camex Reflex cameras, a Geva Carena and a Zeiss Movikon . . . and made frame-line tests for steadiness with all of them . . . I knew for certain that I had found at least part of the answer to my quest". What that quest was the 8mm. user will discover next week.

sional duties. Just so long as he observed the competition rules (limitations as to power and all operation of the equipment his own work) he would be accepted without question.

Surely amateur cinematographers are not less broadminded? If the professional observes the competition rules (no use of professionally-owned equipment and no paid assistance), why not welcome his participation in the Ten Best? And if Mr. Hitchcock is ready to have a go, why not welcome a chance to see what "they" can do under "our" conditions? Don't we want to learn and to improve our standards? The best possible way of doing so is to see what first-rate men can do under amateur conditions. I should perhaps add that I am a real amateur cinematographer in every sense of the word.

Vy 73 and FB DX OM!

Lagos, Nigeria.

J. A. FARRER.

### A Little of What You Fancy

PROVINCIAL Dealer's declaration that there would have been no crisis had the nine-fiver used more film may be true, but can the user be blamed for buying only as much as he needed? The 8mm. and 16mm. user is not forced to buy film to ensure the continued existence of their gauges. If they don't want it, they just don't buy it, and nobody takes them to task. The courage and devotion of those who still sing the undoubted praises of 9.5mm., however, will mean that this gauge will not die in their lifetime—even if they have to re-perforate 35mm., and build their own equipment!

Good luck to A.C.W. as a weekly, and good luck to "the gallant fools"!

Exeter.

J. M. BROWN (age 13).

### WHERE TO SEE THE 1959 TEN BEST

**Stafford.** 17th Feb., 8 p.m. Presented by Stafford A.C.S. at The Arts Centre (Odd-fellows Hall), Stafford. Tickets 2s. 6d. from H. A. Jeffrey, 52 South Walls, Stafford.

**Northwood.** 25th Feb., 3 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. Presented by Pinner C.S. at Acre Hall, Pinner Road, Northwood, Middx. Tickets 2s. 6d. (children 1s. 6d. at 3 p.m. show) from J. E. Franks, 59 Francklyn Gardens, Edgware Middx.

**Tunbridge Wells.** 25th Feb., 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Presented by Regency F.U. at Public Library, Lecture Room, Tunbridge Wells. Tickets 2s. 6d. from A. F. Beecher, 50 Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

**St. Austell.** 2nd Mar., 7.30 p.m. Presented by Mid-Cornwall C.S. at Arts Club Theatre, St. Austell. Tickets 2s. 6d. from M. J. Millard, Clifden Grill, St. Austell.

**London, N.22.** 3rd and 4th Mar. (Friday 8 p.m., Saturday 7.30 p.m.). Presented by St. James-at-Bowes (Wood Green) F.U. at St. James-at-Bowes Church Hall, Arcadian Gardens, High Road, Wood Green, N.22. Tickets 2s. 6d., children accompanied by an adult 1s. 3d., from E. Eady, 74 Tottenham Road, Palmers Green, London, N.13.

**Carlisle.** 13th and 14th Mar., 7.30 p.m. Presented by Carlisle and Border C.C. at Silver Grill Restaurant, English Street, Carlisle. Programmes 2s. 6d. from Hales, 1 Citadel Row and 1-3 Abbey Street, Carlisle.

**Clacton-on-Sea.** 15th Mar., 7.45 p.m. Presented by Clacton C.C. at Savoy Theatre, Clacton-on-Sea. Tickets 2s. 6d. from Frank Judge, Dumont Avenue, Pointclear, St. Osyth, Essex.

### Three Moans—continued

anyone else can do will persuade them that that is not the price the publishers intended. I look in and mention it from time to time, but they have learnt to recognise me now and treat me as a more or less harmless maniac. Meanwhile, their price remains 3s. 6d. higher than anyone else's.

Moan the third: there are film libraries with whom it is the greatest mistake ever to question anything, for you get a long screed back, pointing out that they still maintain pre-war prices, that they make next-to-no-profit, and that you have mortally insulted them. Then they go on to wax indignant: have you ever stopped to think, they demand, what astonishing value they offer? If you're not going to be duly grateful, they'd be obliged if you would not do business with them. Then, when you want to exchange films, they will tell you that those you offer are just a load of rubbish. After a ticking-off like this, even the most awkward customers have been known to send tearful apologies.

### Running Commentary—continued

of whom was able to speak English. It seems strange now, but Hollywood was so nervous of Maurice Chevalier's accent that his first film, *Innocents of Paris*, was prefaced by a lengthy apology explaining that it was better to make do with his accent than have him speak French.

Third tragedy was that only one person had the courage to release a silent film after the change-over. Incidentally, few people will remember at this distance of 31 years that a comparatively unlikely individual pulled off the most triumphant success in turning a partly-shot silent film into a successful talkie which was decidedly ahead of its time in escaping from the restraint of the then sacred microphone. The film? *Welcome Danger*. The star (and wouldn't we welcome his recipe to-day?) . . . Harold Lloyd.

### NEW CLUBS

THERE is no cine club in Ibadan, Western Nigeria, we told reader Philip Warner some months ago. There is one now: the 8/35 Camera Group. Secretary: Philip Warner. The enthusiasm shown at the inaugural meeting promises well for the future. One thing they are particularly keen on is to show the Ten Best. Prospective members should contact Mr. Warner at Lands Division, Ministry of Lands and Housing, Ibadan.

Although only just over two months old, Ecosse Films (Caldereux) A.F.C. have a membership of 45, mostly of young people (age group 15-30). They will work exclusively on 8mm. and have already made preparations for their first feature, *The Magnificent Rebel*, which will tell the story of St. Paul. Details from T. G. McAlpine, 29 Craig Terrace, Caldereux, Lanarkshire.

## News from the Clubs

IF you are interested in trains you will find a welcome in Epsom on Feb. 24th, when Epsom C.S. are presenting *Have ticket, will travel*, a programme about railways; it will include the controversial *Enginemem*. The A.C.W. Gold Star cartoon, *Runaway Train*, with the Grasshopper Group's *An Englishman's Holiday*, supports 70' North, Foursquare Productions' documentary which was so successful at Cannes and in the Australian Gold Cup competition, in a club presentation at the Peace Memorial Hall, Ashted, on Mar. 3rd (8 p.m.). A local newsreel is under way, and a number of scripts have been got ready, one of them based on an idea by Hazel Swift. Results of the annual script competition will be announced next month, and Edwyn Gilmour will give a talk on cameras. The following month will see the premiere of the film the club made last year on an archaeological dig. (Trevor White, 65 Church Road, Epsom, Surrey.)

A public show of 8mm. films is to be mounted by Wanstead & Woodford C.C. next month. Of the eight competition awards made last year, six were taken by 8mm. entries. Winner in a new competition for the best holiday film was E. B. Alvin with *Brixham*—8mm., naturally. The prize was a silver salver presented by member R. Limmer. This year's chairman is Hugh Raggett, who made the Oscar winning *Flick Knife*—8mm., of course. The outgoing chairman, S. B. Shenker, pointed out at the a.g.m. that 20,000ft. of members' film were screened last year; if most of that footage was 8mm. it must surely represent a sizeable number of films. The club welcome prospective members to their meetings at 8 p.m. (can't seem to escape "8", but who would want to?) on the first and third Friday of each month at the Men's Club, Woodford Green. (Mrs. F. M. Webb, 120 Elphinstone Road, Walthamstow, E.17.)

With a membership of 84, Clacton C.C. is the largest club in the Essex Federation, members were told at their a.g.m. A farce, *Rice on the Menu* (8mm. monochrome), is now being shot, and the club have undertaken the production of a 16mm. publicity film (colour) for the Town Council. Members have their own magazine, *Newsreel*, and "hope that it will become the mouthpiece of the club". That, surely, is what every club bulletin should be. There is no point in trying to cast it in the mould of, e.g., A.C.W., with the emphasis on equipment. Do It Yourself and ideas for films. We don't say that with an eye on our sales but because we want to make the point that a club journal should be essentially *personal*, with news and views of members, and fuller details than we are able to give of past and forthcoming club activities. (C. G. Rose, Kingsmead, 18 Lancaster Gardens East, Clacton-on-Sea.

A 4-minute 16mm. monochrome film about the Widnes—Runcorn transporter bridge, shortly to be demolished, was *Heswall* A.C.C.'s contribution to the *Panorama* competition. It did not get into the prize list, but the club is entitled to feel considerable satisfaction at being placed in the first ten out of over a hundred entries. It was a worthwhile project, in any case, and now that there is no longer any need to comply with rigid requirements as to length, *Heswall* might well consider producing a more ample record, for this

sort of subject has great local interest. Their current production is also a film with a purpose: on poliomyelitis. It will run to some 250ft. of 8mm. colour, 180ft. of which have been shot. (N. H. Couche, 19 Ashburton Avenue, Birkenhead.)

Croydon C.C. will screen the 1960 I.A.C. prizewinning films on March 4th (7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.). Colour transparencies moved on automatically by electric pulses from the tape providing the commentary—a "still" technique which is expected to be available for narrow gauge films shortly to give lip synchronisation—were the highlights of a demonstration of tape and its applications by B. Wilson, of B.A.S.F. The film, *The Magic Tape*, was particularly appreciated for its outstanding quality and novelty of treatment, and members have requested a repeat screening. The club meets at 8 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of each month at the West Thornton Community Centre, Thornton Heath Pond. (C. Haydon Brash, 6 Blenheim Park Road, South Croydon, Surrey.)

"We urgently require more films for the club competition to make it worthwhile for a judge to come along and see them", was the heart-cry in Pinner C.S.'s *Newsletter*. In the event, there were not many entries, but the quality was encouraging. The judge was Tony Wiggins; the winning film, *A Christmas Cameo* by Peter Walsh. Recent meetings have been devoted to titles and titling (J. Franks, E. Barrett and K. Mills) and talks by George Sewell and A. Willoughby, the last-named on cameras. (C. J. Sage, 20 Dawlish Drive, Pinner.)

Should the more experienced member stand down and let the less expert have a crack at the competitions? *Christchurch M.C.* point out that in their case it hasn't worked. "There has been no improvement in entries (presumably no increase in the number of entries, for one could scarcely expect improved quality) and the club has suffered as a result. After all, our competitions cater for all grades". To encourage the hesitant, an "Exhibitor's Star" will be presented to every member who has a film shown during the year. (P.O. Box 2006, Christchurch, N.Z.)

### Nomad and Gnome Recorders

END-PIECE to resolve misunderstanding and put the record right about two items of equipment. In his report on developments in 8mm. sound at Photokina published in *A.C.W.* recently, our contributor Desmond Roe stated that it was expected that a 16mm. full width version of the Nomad would be available in due course. The manufacturers of the Nomad, the Magnasync Corporation of California, inform us that Mr. Roe misinterpreted their representative's remarks, which were to the effect that Magnasync *could* make such a machine, but have no plans for doing so. Our apologies for the misunderstanding.

And now for a piece of equipment that is available now: the Gnome tape recorder. Our test report of it in the last of the monthly issues, the January, published on Dec. 23rd, 1960, stated that it would be available "by the end of the year". We meant 1960, of course, but since the issue was dated January 1961, probably not everyone appreciated this. We're sorry if you were misled.

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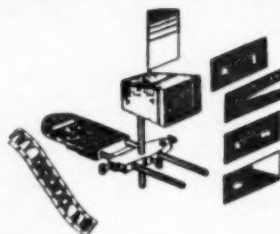
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Cine Titling, by John Daborn. The technique of filming cine titles, stressing the importance of design, lettering styles and other artistic values and explaining new lettering methods. Novelty, trick work, and animation are included whilst hints and tips are based on first-hand experience. Half-tone illustrations. 112 pp. 6½ x 4½in., price 8/6.

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Filming in Colour, by Derek Townsend, M.B.K.S., A.I.C.F. A guide for all who shoot colour. Covers the film, colour temperature, filters, exposure, colour appreciation problems, the lens, filming by artificial light, practical outdoor and holiday filming, choice of equipment, film equipment, film technique, projecting. Glossary of terms relating to cine. Line illustrations. 128 pp. 6½ x 4½in., price 8/6.

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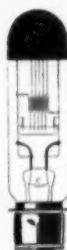
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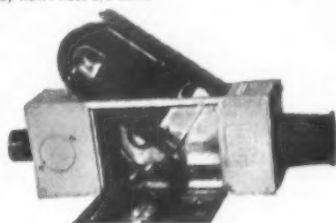
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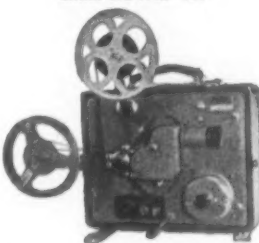
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